## PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

TEACE IDENTIF	ICATION FO	TCIVI	
ADDRESS	TYPE		
5 Harcourt Street TITLE "Carn Brea"	[ ] S [ ] D [ ] V	andscape feature	[ ] Outbuildings [ ] Industrial Building [ ] Public building [ ] Other
EXISTING DESIGNATION	HBR [ ] GBR [	] AHC [ ] NT [	] VAS [ ]
STREETSCAPE LEVEL		] 3 [ ] ] SIGNIFICANT [ ] KERB & GUTTERS	
GRADING		] C[] BUILDING[]	D[] E[]
RECOMMENDED FOR	VAS [ ] PLAN	AHC [×] URBAN NING SCHEME PROTECTI PE [ ] OTHER [ ]	CONSERVATION AREA [×]
SURVEY DATE Sep. 91.  NEG FILE 29.04,05  Title vol. Fol.			
THEME [ ] Early Settlement [X] Mansions [ ] Victorian Garden			
CONSTRUCTION DETAILS Date 1873, 1927 Architect John Beswicke Builder (cavilest section) Norms (1927 Elements-house and garden) House, garden, fernery, fence, garage, grotto, gardeners quarkers.	ASSECTION		
[X] Contributing garden [ ] Landmark tree		early hard landscap early fence (paintal	
NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICAN			
See attached			
INTEGRITY Good [x] (for No Fair [] des	condition (Condition	Good [x] Fair [ ] Poor [ ]	

The site information given above has been determined from external street level inspection.

Associated significant garden [X]

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

#### 5 HARCOURT STREET

"CARN BREA"

#### History

The earliest section of "CarmBrea" was built in 1873 for Charles Beswicke, pioneer squatter in the Mordiallic area and then Geelong. It was the first of the grand villa residences in garden settings in Harcourt Street designed by Charles's son, the well-known Hawthorn architect, John Beswicke. Purchased by the Nicholas family (of Aspro fame) in 1920, the residence was rebuilt and the garden enlarged and enhanced in 1927 from the designs of the notable architect, Harry Norris. 1

The site on which the property is situated formed part of the Village of Rathmines (noted for its elevated sites and spectacular views), the name given to the subdivision of Crown Allotment 70 in the Parish of Boroondara in the mid-1850s. The Village comprised a block bounded by Barkers, Burke, Rathmines and Auburn Roads. It was developed by middle-class business and professional people, whose grand villas generally incorporated large gardens and paddocks.<sup>2</sup>

Charles Beswicke's house was listed in 1874 as a house and two acres with an NAV of 60 pounds.<sup>3</sup> A surviving plan dated 4 August 1920 shows the original two-storeyed house.<sup>4</sup> The construction of "Carn Brea" began the association between the Beswicke family and Harcourt Street which was to last over 100 years. John Beswicke, its designer, became Hawthorn's leading 19th century architect and was responsible for many of the town's finest public, commercial and residential buildings. His work was not confined to Hawthorn. Other major projects included the Australian Building in Elizabeth Street (in conjunction with Oakden, Addison and Kemp). However, it was for his row of large Victorian villas in Harcourt Street, most built for family members of friends, that John Beswicke is best known. The earliest known documentation of the house and garden at 5 Harcourt Street is contained in various MMBW plans dating from 1902-1905, particularly a 1903 detailed plan.<sup>5</sup>

The property passed through a number of owners until, in 1920, it was purchased by Isabel Nicholas, wife of Alfred Nicholas, the "Aspro King". The family also purchased adjoining land to the west to enlarge the existing garden. A 1920 contract plan shows a large extension to the east of the earlier residence and revised layout for the front garden. A simple block plan and fence design was prepared by the architect, Harry Norris, probably in 1920. Nicholas carried out major alterations to the residence in 1927 and in June that year produced a sheet of drawings entitled "Formal Garden to Carn-Brea" which showed a circular garden with four square pergolas. In April

<sup>1.</sup> National Trust FN 5186.

The Village of Rathmines. Area Walk V. Hawthorn Historical Society, Gwen McWilliam, 1987-88.

<sup>3.</sup> National Trust FN 5186.

<sup>4.</sup> Copy of plan supplied by National Trust.

<sup>5.</sup> MMBW detail plan No. 1560 (May 1903).

National Trust FN 5186.

#### 5 Harcourt Street continued

1928, Norris produced a plan for the entire property entitled "Lay-Out of Paths, Drives and Gardens etc. to Carn-Brae". Percy Trevaskis, gardener at the Nicholas hill station, "Burnham Beeches" was brought out from England by Alfred Nicholas in 1929. Trevaskis later recalled that in the same year, a specialist orchid grower, Fred Chilvers, was also brought out to tend the garden at "Carn Brea". 8

The additions and alterations to the 5 Harcourt Street house and garden were perhaps the earliest commissions Nicholas gave to the young architect, Harry Norris. They marked the beginning of a fruitful patronage that arose through a common interest in tennis. (Norris gave Nicholas lessons). Norris' practice began in August 1919. He became the official architect for the Nicholas Group of Companies and designed the Nicholas Building, Swanston Street (1926) followed by "Burnham Beeches", Sherbrook (1930-33) and various laboratories for Nicholas and Aspro. Other major works in Melbourne included "Kellow House", St. Kilda Road (1929); the Capitol Bakeries, South Yarra (1929); Coles No. 4 Store (now David Jones) (1929); Block Court, Collins Street (1930); the Majorca Buildings, Flinders Lane (1931); Mitchell House, corner Elizabeth and Lonsdale Streets (1938) and Wesley College through the 1930s.9

Norris' redesign of "Carn Brea" extended the notion of a 19th century mansion in a garden setting. The additions included half-timbered gabled, tiled roofs, bay windows, leadlighting and delicate interior plaster work. 10

The 1928 garden alterations may have been carried out by the landscape designer, Hugh Linaker, who undertook work for Alfred Nicholas in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Linaker provided advice at "Burnham Beeches", where he became gardener from 1929-36. 11

Upon the death of Alfred Nicholas in 1937, the property was sold and subsequently passed through several ownerships. Land to the north abutting Maurice Street was subdivided c1945 and a small portion of the Nicholas development (gardener's quarters, balustraded terracing and steps) still remains at the rear of 6 Maurice Street. 12

<sup>7.</sup> Copy of plans supplied by National Trust.

Quoted in Alfred Nicholas Memorial Gardens Conservation Analysis,
 Nigel Lewis, Richard Aitken Pty. Ltd., 1991.

National Trust FN 5186.

<sup>10.</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11.</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12.</sup> Ibid.

#### 5 Harcourt Street continued

#### Description

A brick and render Californian bungalow in mansion house guise, modelled out of a grand Victorian Mansion house. Norris added new rooms across the whole of the frontage of the Beswicke building, adopting a single storey with attic storey form, rather than the two storey form of the then existing building. Gables were applied to the old building and the interior completely gutted and remodelled.

A conservatory was added to the side incorporating a perplexing low pitched roof. The upper floor rooms gain light from unequally spaced dormers. At least one of these has been altered by lowering the sill.

On the west side of the house an extensive grotto and pergola fernery was added. Norris also effected designs for garden pergolas and the long pergola along the service entrance.

See separate P.I.F. for the garden.

#### Assessment

There are many more scholarly Californian bungalow designs than Carn Brea in Melbourne's suburbs. The adaptation of Victorian mansion to the new design shows the inexperience of the young architect. In several areas the design is unresolved or lacking any decisive design directions. However key areas are significant for their 1920s design; the garden design and its associated structures; the ballroom; the billiard room; to a lesser extent the first floor bedrooms; the two surviving bathrooms and the conservatory.

The cultural significance of the place as a whole relates primarily to the garden, with the house as a structure in that garden. On a secondary level the complex is significant as the first mansion by Beswicke, for the association with the Nicholas family and for the contribution it makes to the Mansion house Urban Conservation Area.

#### Significance

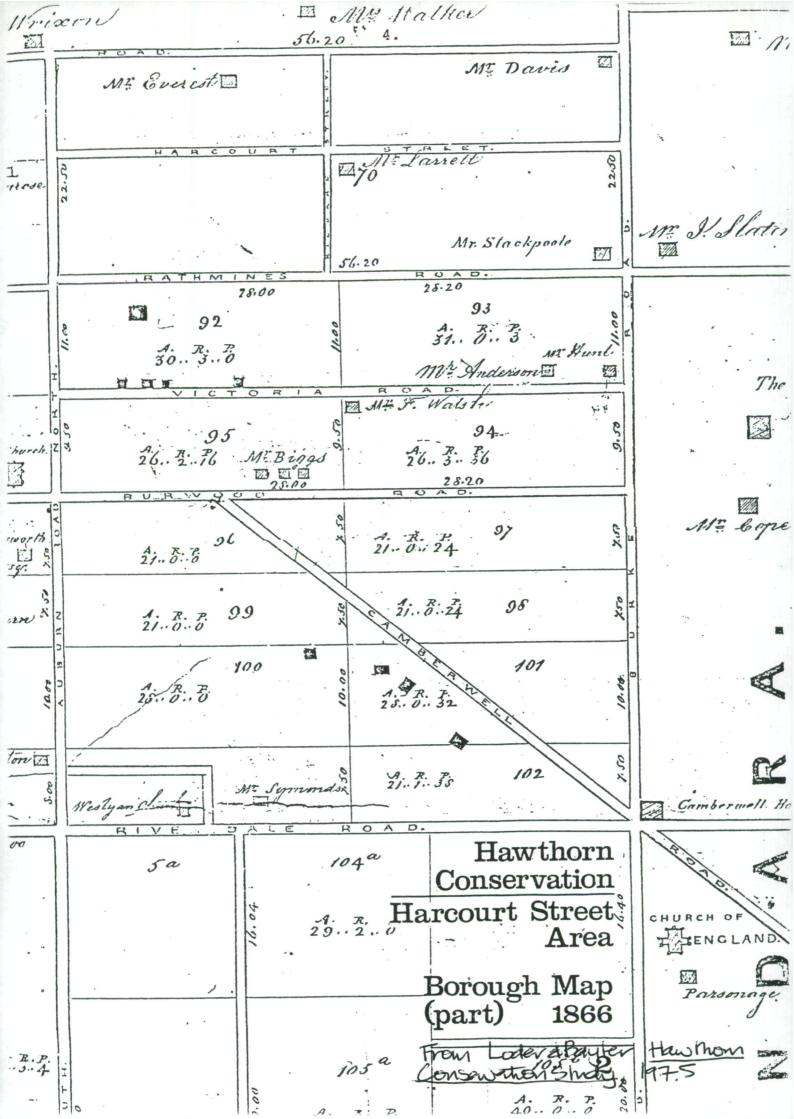
- 1. "Carn Brea" was developed by the Beswicke family as a city mansion in a garden setting in the mid-1870s and extended in the late 1920s from the designs of architect, Harry Norris, for the Nicholas family. It has historical significance as a grand Victorian villa residence sympathetically redesigned and extended in 1920-28, and is largely intact from this period. It contributes to Harcourt Street, a precinct of intact late 19th and early 20th century mansions and villas without parallel in Melbourne. It has important associations with the Beswicke family, and most particularly with John Beswicke, who became Hawthorn's leading 19th century architect, being the first of the row of grand houses in garden settings designed by Beswicke on elevated sites on the north side of Harcourt Street.
- 2. From the 1920s, the property had significant links with the Nicholas family, prominent in Melbourne's commercial world and noted philanthropists. "Carn Brea" forms a complement to the hill station properties of Alfred Nicholas ("Burnham Beeches") and his brother,

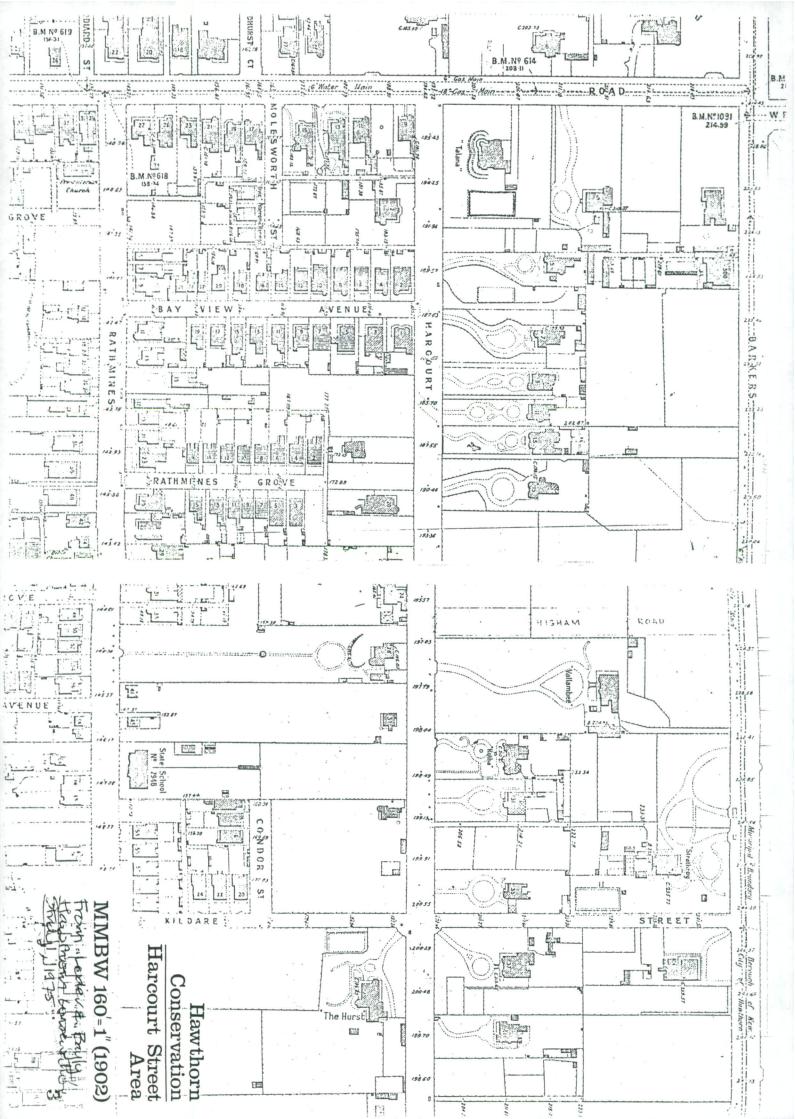
#### 5 Harcourt Street continued

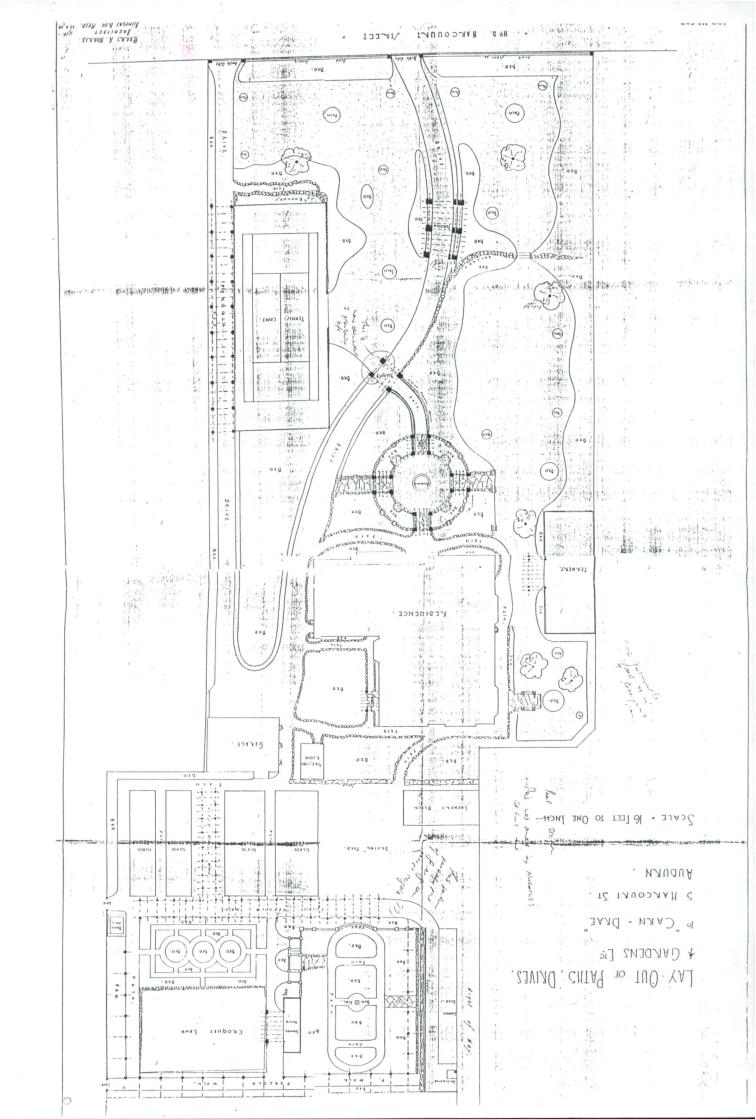
George Nicholas ("Alton", Mt. Macedon). It is important, also, for its links with the significant client/architect relationship which developed between Alfred Nicholas and Harry Norris, and the collection of architecturally and historically important domestic, institutional and commercial commissions that followed as a result of the patronage.

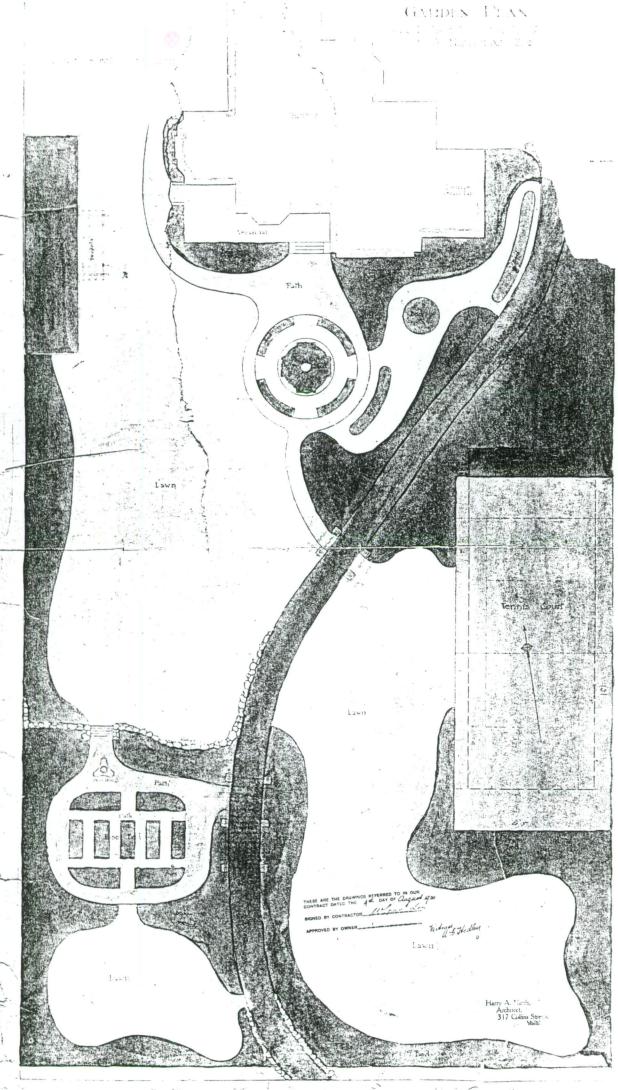
- 3. The garden setting of "Carn Brea" is of special significance and includes a collection of trees characteristic of late 19th century Victorian gardens. The retention of garden elements and buildings is of importance and includes a timber pergola and fernery (described by Peter Watts as one of the largest in the state), conservatory, fountain, sundial, tennis court, front fence and gardens. This significance is enhanced by the fact that architect, Harry Norris, was responsible for the redesign of both house and garden and that his plans (especially those dating from 1920 and 1928) have survived and provide documentation for the extant house and garden.
- 4. Architecturally significant for the substantially intact 1920s interior. Important spaces include; the ballroom and billiard room with their panelled hall approach, to a lesser extent the two principal living rooms adjoining the hall, the kitchen, the south facing first floor rooms, two bathrooms and the conservatory.











#### PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM - PRIVATE GARDENS ADDRESS 5 Harcourt Street TYPE Hawthorn [ ] Suburban Garden [ ] Cottage Garden [ ] Terrace House Garden [ ] Villa Garden [ ] View [ ] Landmark "Carn Brea" TITLE [X] City Mansion Garden [ ] Other EXISTING DESIGNATION HBR [ ] AHC [ ] NT [ ] SIGN. T. [ ] VGS [ ] 2 [ ] STREETSCAPE LEVEL 1 [ X ] 3 [ ] GRADING A[X]B [ ] C[] D[] E[] HBR [ ] AHC [ ] SIGNIFICANT TREE REG. [ ] PSP [ X ] RECOMMENDED FOR CULTURAL LANDSCAPE [ ] URBAN CONSERVATION AREA [X] **SURVEY DATE 28.11.91** NEG FILE EA2/2 Title Vol. Fol. THEME [] Early Settlement [X] Mansions [ ] Victorian Garden Suburb

DETAILS
Date 1873, 1927
Designer 1927 H. Norms
Layout/Structures

[ ] Municipal dev. [ ] 1870s growth [ ] Garden villas [ ] Working enclaves [ ] Commercial Centres [ ] Edwardian Prosperity [ ] Interwar Housing [ ] Flats and Offices



#### NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See attached report Courtesy of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) December 1991.

INTEGRITY	Good	[X]	CONDITION	Good	[X]
	Fair	[ ]		Fair	[ ]
	Poor	[ ]		Poor	[ ]

#### ALTERATIONS

# CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION Associated Structures [X]

As the gardens were only surveyed from the front footpath, all assessments are incomplete and hence provisional. The scope of the study did not permit garden access which would be a pre-requisite for a more complete assessment.

NAME OF PLACE

CARN BREA

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

City of Hawthorn.

LOCATION/ADDRESS

5 Harcourt Street, Hawthorn, 3122.

CADASTRAL INFORMATION

Part Crown Portion 70, Parish of Boroondara, County of Bourke.

TYPE OF PLACE

City Mansion Garden.

EXTENT OF CLASSIFICATION

See attached plan.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Carn Brea, developed by the Beswicke family as a city mansion from the mid 1870s, purchased by the Nicholas family in 1920, the garden considerably enlarged and enhanced, and the residence

rebuilt in 1928, is of State significance:

as a representative city mansion garden of the late nineteenth century, skilfully and sympathetically redesigned in 1920 and 1928 and largely intact from 1928; major attributes include the sweeping entry drive, mature trees, large open lawns, architectural garden features and early site planning; for its collection of trees characteristic of late

nineteenth century gardens in Victoria;

for its retention of garden elements and buildings including pergolas, shadehouse?, conservatory, tennis court,

front fence and gates;

for the manner in which the garden provides an appropriate setting for a residence of considerable architectural significance; this is enhanced by the fact that architect Harry Norris was responsible for the design of both the house and garden;

for its links with the Nicholas family, prominent in Melbourne's commercial world and noted philanthropists; Carn Brea forms a complement to Burnham Beeches, the hill station

property of Alfred Nicholas;

for the survival of plans (especially those dating from 1920 and 1928) which formed the documentation for the extant

house and garden;

for its contribution to Harcourt Street, a precinct of intact late nineteenth and early twentieth century mansions and villas probably without parallel in Melbourne; Carn Brea is enhanced in this respect by its link with the architect John Beswicke and as the first property to be developed on the north side of Harcourt Street;

- for its aesthetic qualities, derived from the sloping site with fine views to the south, intactness of the surrounding streetscape, mature trees and early garden elements such as the fence, gates and pergolas which complement the architecture of the residence.

HISTORY

The site on which Carn Brea is situated formed part of the Village of Rathmines, the name given to the subdivision of Crown Allotment 70 (Parish of Boroondara) in the mid 1850s.(1) The Village comprised a block bounded by Barkers, Burke, Rathmines and Auburn Roads. The Village was developed by middle class business and professional people who could afford to buy from 6 to 12 acres and own a horse and conveyance to take them to town or, from 1861, to the Hawthorn Railway Station. Their homes were built on the high parts of their properties, generally set back from the roads and these villas generally incorporated large gardens and paddocks. The Village also attracted farmers, market gardeners, dairymen and carters who lived and worked on or near their small allotments. During the two decades following subdivision there was probably little change in the area. At the beginning of the 1870s the nearby St James Park subdivision attracted interest in the Hawthorn area and Rathmines Village, although remote from the railway station, was still largely attractive rural land. -

Towards the end of 1873 Charles Beswicke was first listed in the Hawthorn ratebooks and he was the first resident to be listed on the north side of Harcourt Street. He erected his house at 5 Harcourt Street (the site of Carn Brea) during 1873 and the following year Beswicke's property was listed as a house and 2 acres with a net annual value of £60.(2) The Beswicke family's move into Harcourt Street and Hawthorn began an association which lasted over 100 years. Charles' son John was Hawthorn's leading architect of the nineteenth century, and responsible for many of Hawthorn's finest public, commercial and residential buildings. His work was not confined to Hawthorn and other major projects included the Australian Building in Elizabeth Street (in conjunction with Oakden Addison & Kemp). It was for his row of large Victorian villas in Harcourt Street, most built for family members or friends, that John Beswicke is best remembered. The earliest known documentation of the garden at 5 Harcourt Street is contained in various MMBW plans dating from 1902 to 1905 but shown most clearly in the 40 ft = 1 inch detail plan of 1903 (see attached plan).(3)

5 Harcourt Street passed through a number of owners until, in 1920, it was purchased by Isabel Nicholas, wife of 'Aspro King' Alfred Nicholas. (4) They also purchased adjoining land to the west to enlarge the existing garden. The earliest known reference to the garden during the Nicholas ownership is a contract plan signed in August 1920 by W Loud & Son (see attached plan - refer Analysis for discussion of this scheme).(5) This indicates a large extension to the east of the earlier residence and shows a revised layout for the front A simple block plan and fence design were prepared by the architect Harry A Norris probably in 1920 (the same sheet of drawings shows an existing conditiions plan of the two-storey Victorian residence) and the surviving fence corresponds to this design. (6) Nicholas carried out further major alterations to the residence in 1927 and in June that year Norris produced a sheet of drawings entitled 'Formal Garden to Carn-Brae' which showed a circular garden with four square pergolas. (7) In April 1928 Norris produced a plan for the entire property, entitled 'Lay-Out of Paths, Drives and Gardens Etc to Carn-Brae' (see attached plan - refer Analysis for discussion of this scheme).(8) Upon the death of Alfred Nicholas in 1937 the property was sold and has subsequently passed through several ownerships. Land to the north abutting Maurice Street was subdivided c.1945 and a small portion of the Nicholas development (gardener's quarters, balustraded terracing and steps) still remains at the rear of 6 Maurice Street.(9) The large shadehouse is thought to have been demolished c.1989-91.

Carn Brea is set on a large sloping block (0.7 ha) with the house placed well back from the frontage in order to gain views to the south. Originally, views would have extended to the bay. The street frontage is defined by a low brick and timber fence (thought to date from 1920) although the original finish has now been covered by grey paint. The property has two main drives, the principal one leads from the centre of the frontage and sweeps in a gentle curve past the east of the house to the garage at the rear north-eastern boundary. This is entered through iron gates and its surface is now asphalt with bluestone pitcher edging, presumably replacing an earlier gravel surface. A service drive runs directly from the frontage to the garage along the eastern boundary. The main drive passes under a stone and timber pergola. Directly in front of the house is a large lily pond with a central fountain and square pergolas at the cardinal points. The southern-most pergola leads to a small curved path which crosses the main drive (and which was formerly marked by another pergola, now dismantled) to the tennis court. The tennis court is hedged in <u>Cupressus sempervirens 'Stricta'</u> and the section of the drive to the east is covered by a long pergola. The rest of the front garden is given over to lawn dotted with specimen trees and bounded by shrubberies. Particularly conspicuous are two Phoenix canariensis on the eastern lawn, and on the western lawn, four Populus deltoides, two Ficus macrophylla, two Cedrus atlantica and two Weeping Elms set on a large timber frame. There are also large specimens of Cupressus macrocarpa along the western boundary. Close to the street frontage are a number of inappropriate plantings, mostly of recent origin, including both Australian native species and small conifers. West of the residence is a timber pergola and large fernery, described by Peter Watts as one of the largest in the state. A large Plane tree in the fernery area and an old Nerium oleander underneath the large trees on the western boundary are also thought to be early plantings. A swimming pool has been developed behind the fernery and this is divided from the rear service yard of the residence by a low retaining wall. The service yard has several beds of grass and a small plot of roses but is largely of a utilitarian character. A small glazed conservatory is attached to the eastern side of the house (which was part of the original design). The garden at Carn Brea, like the house, retains features from several major periods of development. Evidence of the nineteenth century garden layout is provided by the 1903-1905 MMBW plans; features retained from this early scheme include the main curving path, eastern drive, general position of tennis court, circular path/feature south of the front door, general site plan of the western portion of the residence and position of garage. The garden plan of 1920 is particularly informative although a presumed second sheet (showing the northern portion of the site) has not been sighted. The 1920 plan retained many elements from the Victorian era garden and incorporated several new features of which the following still survive; northern section of the main path, straightening of the east drive at the entrance, division of the circular garden bed into quadrants, fernery/shadehouse?, southern pergola and extension of the lawn into the western block. The garden plan of 1928 is the only document which shows the full extent of the Nicholas era garden. Most features from the 1920 scheme were retained with the notable exception of the south-western rose garden (which may never have even been constructed). The circular feature in front of the house assumed its final form as part of the 1928 scheme (the details are shown in a Norris drawing of June 1927) and the large pergola over the eastern drive adjoining the tennis court was developed at this stage. It is assumed that the northern formal garden shown on the 1928 plan was executed and it can be argued that the garden at Carn Brea reached its peak during the second half of the Nicholas ownership (ie 1928-1937). Developments and changes since the Nicholas ownership have included the destruction of the northern formal garden through subdivision, the construction of a swimming pool north-west of the residence (on land not apparently owned by the Nicholas family), and the destruction of the fernery?

From analysis of early plans and the surviving landscape it can be seen that Carn Brea retains much of its layout as a late Victorian city mansion garden. Both the Nicholas schemes of 1920 and 1928 respected the main nineteenth century layout and enhanced the landscaping by the incorporation of stylish garden elements such as pergolas and formal path system in front of the residence. These features closely related to the redesign of the Victorian residence by Harry Norris.

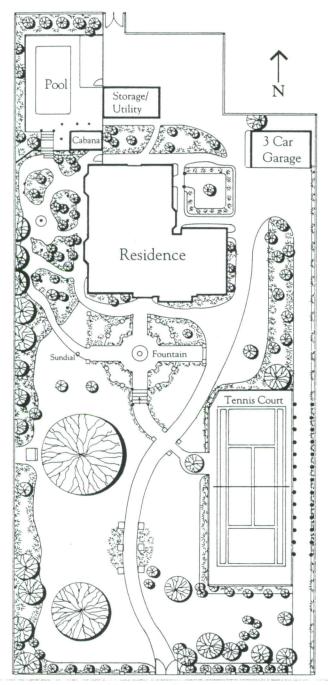
Attribution of the design remains conjectural although it seems highly likely that the landscape designer Hugh Linaker was involved in the 1928 scheme, if not the 1920 scheme. Linaker undertook work for Alfred Nicholas in the late 1920s and early 1930s providing advice on the Nicholas hill station Burnham Beeches. Percy Trevaskis, gardener at Burnham Beeches from 1929 to 19?, is quoted as saying ... (11)

Carn Brea relates strongly to the history of Hawthorn through its association with Rathmines Village, its pivotal role in the development of the northern side of Harcourt Street, and its links with the prominent Beswicke family.

#### REFERENCES

- (1) Throughout this classification report, the name of the property is spelt 'Carn Brea'. This is taken from the name of the Nicholas family company Carnbrea Investments Pty Ltd and differs from the spelling on both the architect's drawings and the extant name plates on the gate posts; the early history of this property is taken from the National Trust Urban Conservation Classification Report 'Rathmines Village (Harcourt Street)'.
- (2) Copy of ratebook research held on National Trust F.N.5186.
- (3) MMBW detail plan No.1560, 40 ft = 1 inch, lithographed May 1903.
- (4) Details of the Nicholas ownership are based on research by Georgina Whitehead, copy held on National Trust gardens file.
- (5) Copy of plan held on National Trust F.N.5186.
- (6) ibid.
- (7) ibid.
- (8) ibid.
- (9) Research by Georgina Whitehead, op.cit.
- (10) The structure was still extant when photographed by Francine Gilfedder on 24 October 1989.
- (11) Reminiscenses of Percy Trevaskis quoted in Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, 'Alfred Nicholas Memorial Gardens Conservation Analysis', prepared for Department of Conservation & Environment, 1991.

# "CARN BREA"



Harcourt Street

Inspection strictly by appointment



### After Hours:

Peter Bennison 813 2248 Richard Mackinnon 883 5872 Tim Derham 822 6119

The A. Micholas For Harcourt St Scale 8 feet to continctive Hawthon House 1989. Path esecute 1 .... 11 Harry A. Monis, Architect, 317 Collins Street,