

PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

ADDRESS

7 Harcourt Street

TYPE

- Single Residence
- Shop
- Office
- Landscape feature
- View
- Multiple Unit Res.
- Outbuildings
- Industrial Building
- Public building
- Other

TITLE

"Lexinton" formerly, now "Murtoa"

EXISTING DESIGNATION

HBR [] GBR [] AHC [] NT [] VAS []

STREETSCAPE LEVEL

1 [] 2 [] 3 []
 SIGNIFICANT [] SIGNIFICANT []
 STREET TREES KERB & GUTTERS

GRADING

A [] B [] C [] D [] E []
 KEYNOTE BUILDING []

RECOMMENDED FOR

HBR/GBR [] AHC [] URBAN CONSERVATION AREA [] VAS [] PLANNING SCHEME PROTECTION [] CULTURAL LANDSCAPE [] OTHER []

SURVEY DATE

Sep. 91.

NEG FILE

29.05.06.

Title
Vol.
Fol.

THEME

- Early Settlement
- Mansions
- Victorian Garden Suburb
- Municipal dev.
- 1870s growth
- Garden villas
- Working enclaves
- Commercial Centres
- Edwardian Prosperity
- Interwar Housing
- Flats and Offices

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Date 1887
 Architect John Beswicke.
 Builder
 Elements -
 Mansion house and garden.



- Contributing garden
- Landmark tree
- Original or early hard landscape layout
- Original or early fence (part)

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See attached

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

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated significant garden []

7 Harcourt Street continued

The relatively intact garden and what appears to be an intact mansion house, together present an excellent picture of the intentions of Beswicke's scheme in Harcourt Street. This property makes a substantial contribution to the significance of the Harcourt Street Mansion precinct and should be investigated for its suitability for the Historic Buildings Register.

Significance

State

1. Architecturally and historically significant as the oldest, largely unaltered, Beswicke mansion in the Harcourt Street Precinct of State significance. Possibly additionally significant individually (examination required).
2. Significant for the substantially intact garden form, which combines with the house to provide an excellent picture of the intentions of Beswicke's grand scheme for Harcourt Street.
3. Significant for its substantial contribution to the Harcourt Street mansion house precinct.



7 HARCOURT STREET

"LEXINTON"

History

The former "Lexinton" and later, "Murton" or "Murtoa", is the oldest of the Beswicke houses in Harcourt Street and a most important Beswicke family house. It was built in 1877 for Egbert S. Wills, banker, and son-in-law of Charles Beswicke. It was most probably designed by John Beswicke. This house, which was possibly extended in the 1880s before the family moved east along the street, had various tenants.

Description

Building not visible from the street, concealed by substantial trees. The garden form follows the illustration on the 1902 MMBW map. See following P.I.F. for garden.

Site inspection strongly recommended to facilitate architectural assessment.

Assessment

"Harcourt Street runs through one of the oldest estate subdivisions in Hawthorn. John Robert Murphy bought Crown portion 70 of some 124 acres (bounded today by Rathmines, Burke, Barkers and Auburn Roads) at the Crown sales in c1851 for about \$900; the then Dean of Melbourne, Hussey Burgh Macartney, buying the block next door in Kew at about the same time. In 1852 small half acre blocks in the Village of Hawthorn around Lennox Street sold for a couple of hundred dollars each, and by 1853 Murphy's allotment had been neatly chopped into 112 one-acre blocks with enough left over to make Harcourt Street, which cut the subdivision in half one way, with Kildare Street cutting it the other way. The subdivision was called the Village of Rathmines. The blocks were in four parallel lines (except for five at either end facing Auburn and Burke Roads) facing either side of Harcourt Street with Rathmines Road on the south and "Westmoreland Road" on the north. At that time Barkers Road finished at Auburn Road, and what little traffic came that way (from the bridge over the river at Burwood Road) should have then turned down Auburn Road and travelled out along Rathmines Road and Canterbury Road to the hills. The choice of the name "Westmoreland Road" possibly points to an "Old Country" origin for the street names, despite later popular opinion that "Harcourt" and "Rathmines" were firstly the names of houses (which, in fact, were not erected until at least a decade later)".¹³

In the 1850s and 1860s several large mansions were built and some small homes. Most of these are since demolished making way for further subdivisions. Those left are "Borak House" at 28 Ryeburn Avenue (remodelled), William Davies house at 1099 Burke Road (greatly extended), "Oakburne" at 24 Harcourt Street and 88 Harcourt Street.

In 1863 there were 13 inhabited buildings in Crown portion 70. By the turn of the century there were ten times that number, mostly from the 1880s.

¹³. Loder & Bayly, *Hawthorn Conservation Study, Harcourt Street Area*, 1978, p.5.

7 Harcourt Street continued

In 1873 Charles Beswicke had his son design a mansion on 3 acres at 5 Harcourt Street. Charles Beswicke came to Victoria with his brothers in the 1840s but after both brothers died he returned to England. He returned to Geelong as a squatter. John was born on 30 November 1847 to Charles and Eliza.

John was educated at Geelong Grammar and articulated to Crouch & Wilson. In 1883 he entered into partnership with Wilson. In 1889 he joined with Hutchins, in 1890 with Coote. From 1893 he practised alone. Charles and his extended family, moved up and down Harcourt Street, building one house, then disposing of it and building another. John designed them all, ten in total, (possibly 11) on the same basic principal - A huge front garden gently sloping to the street, incorporating a sweeping drive, some ornamental sections of garden and a mansion house.

The Beswickes could not have chosen a better location or time for their development. The high ground here was already home to mansions of the 1850s and 1860s. The land on the urban fringe offered panoramic views and clean country air, serviced if required nearby, by the railway (at Hawthorn in 1861 until 1882 when the Auburn line was extended). At South Yarra, East Melbourne and St. Kilda much smaller sites were available. At Hawthorn it was possible to have sufficient land to feel like a country estate. The timing was perfect. The 1880s were economic boom times, pushed on by too much lending on speculative ventures. A time when money flowed freely for land speculation, and it was important to be seen to have wealth.

John Beswicke designed 10 or 11 of the following houses in Harcourt Street.

1873	No. 5
1878	No. 7 (for Charles' son in law)
1879	No. 15 for Charles
1881	No. 13 for John & Charles Jnr.
1881	No. 25 "Yallambie" for Alexander Higham.
1882	No. 35 "Charlton" for Charles.
1883	No. 31 for Beswicke
1884	No. 41 for J. & R. Martin "Carrick Hill".
1885	No. 11 "Thurston" for Eliza Beswicke.
1885	No. 37 (9 Kildare St) for Hodgkinson.
1887	No. 9 "Chelmsford" for John Duigan.
1887	No. 4 or 2 for Joseph Britten.
1888	No. 29 "Rotha" for John Beswicke.
1891	No. 16 for Isabel Scott.
1891	No. 20 for Euphemia Law
1890c	Cnr Auburn Road for Leo Cussens.
1900	No. 1 (27 Auburn Road) "Tolarna" for Annie Jones.

Beswicke designed extensively throughout Hawthorn and the wider Metropolitan area, including shops - Auburn Road, the Australia building in Elizabeth Street 1889, Hawthorn Town Hall and many other town halls in Melbourne. Beswicke is thought to be responsible for many other mansions throughout the suburbs. He died around 1906.

The concentration of like designed mansion houses from the late 20th century at Harcourt Street is without equal in Melbourne. Although similarly large examples can be found in Toorak and St. Kilda there are no comparable examples where such a large number by one architect, seemingly working to a precinct objective, can be found.

Wrixon

Mr Stalker
56.20 4.

Mr

ROAD.
Mr Everest

Mr Davis

HARCOURT STREET.
22.50
56.20

Mr Larell
70
Mr Stackpoole
22.50

Mr J. Slater

RATHMINES ROAD.
78.00
92
A. R. P.
30.. 3.. 0
11.00

28.20
93
A. R. P.
31.. 0.. 3
Mr Anderson
11.00

VICTORIA ROAD.
95
A. R. P.
26.. 2.. 76
Mr Biggs
28.00

Mr F. Walster
94
A. R. P.
26.. 3.. 56
28.20
9.50

BURWOOD ROAD.
96
A. R. P.
27.. 0.. 0
4.50

97
A. R. P.
21.. 0.. 24
4.50

99
A. R. P.
21.. 0.. 0
4.50

98
A. R. P.
21.. 0.. 24
4.50

100
A. R. P.
28.. 0.. 0
10.00

101
A. R. P.
28.. 0.. 32
10.00

Westyan Church
Mr Symonds
50

102
A. R. P.
21.. 1.. 38
7.50

Mr Gope

RA
R

Camberwell Ho

5a

104a
A. R. P.
29.. 2.. 0
16.04

Hawthorn
Conservation
Harcourt Street
Area
Borough Map
(part) 1866

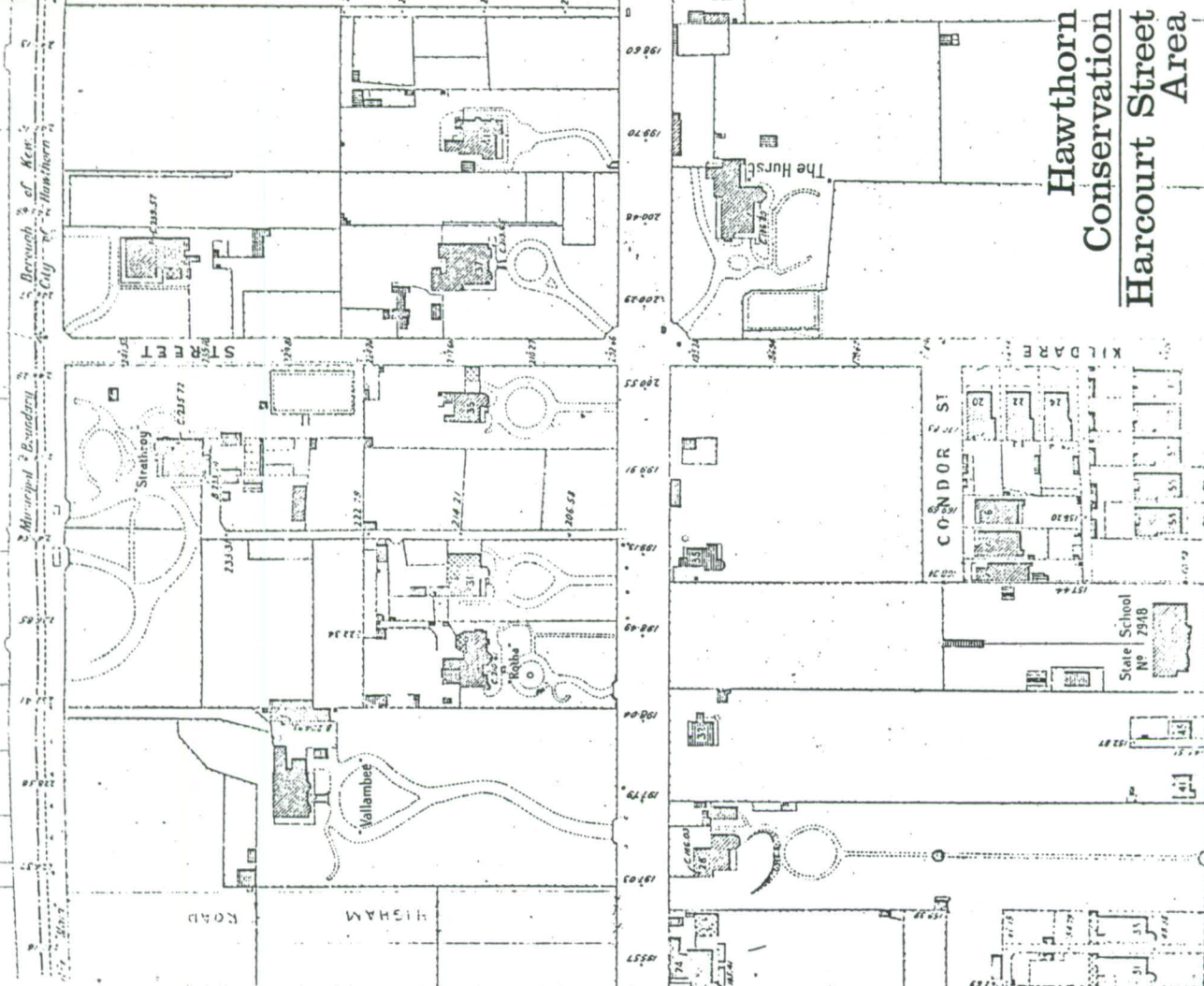
ROAD.
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.
Parsonage

105a
A. R. P.
40.. 0.. 0
7.00

From Loder & Bayler
Conservation Study
105a
A. R. P.
40.. 0.. 0
20.00

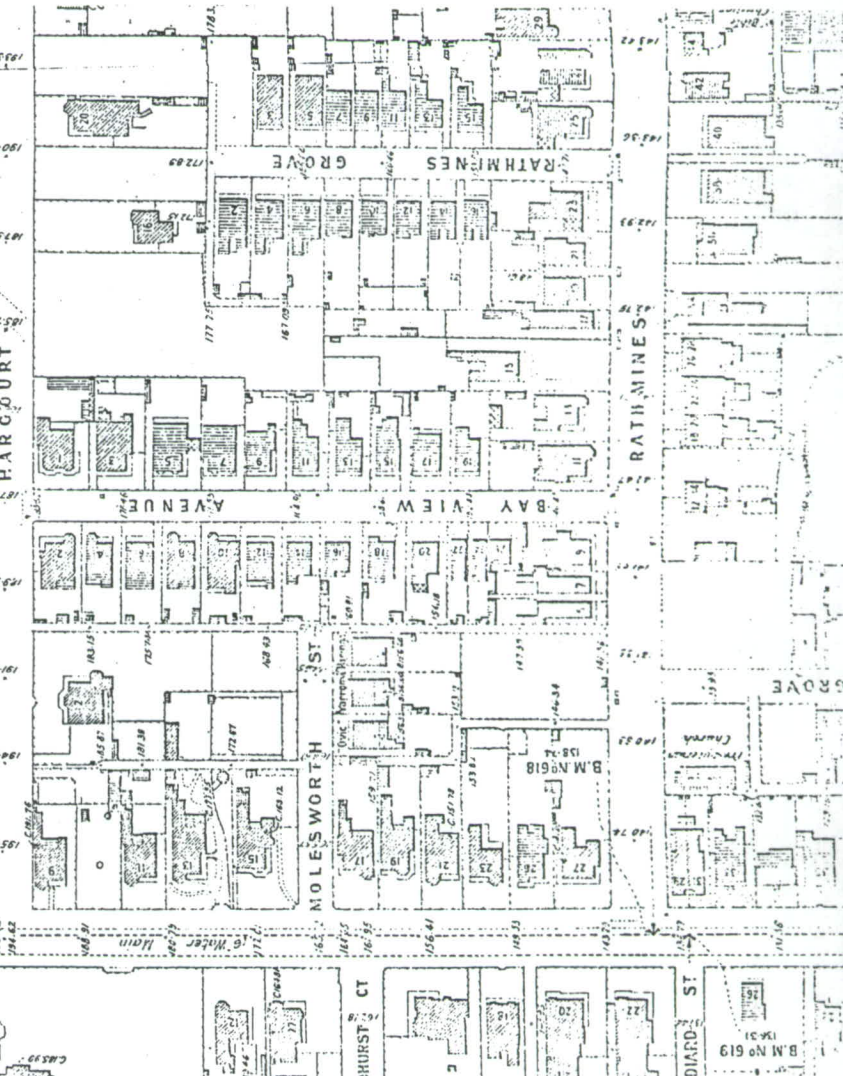
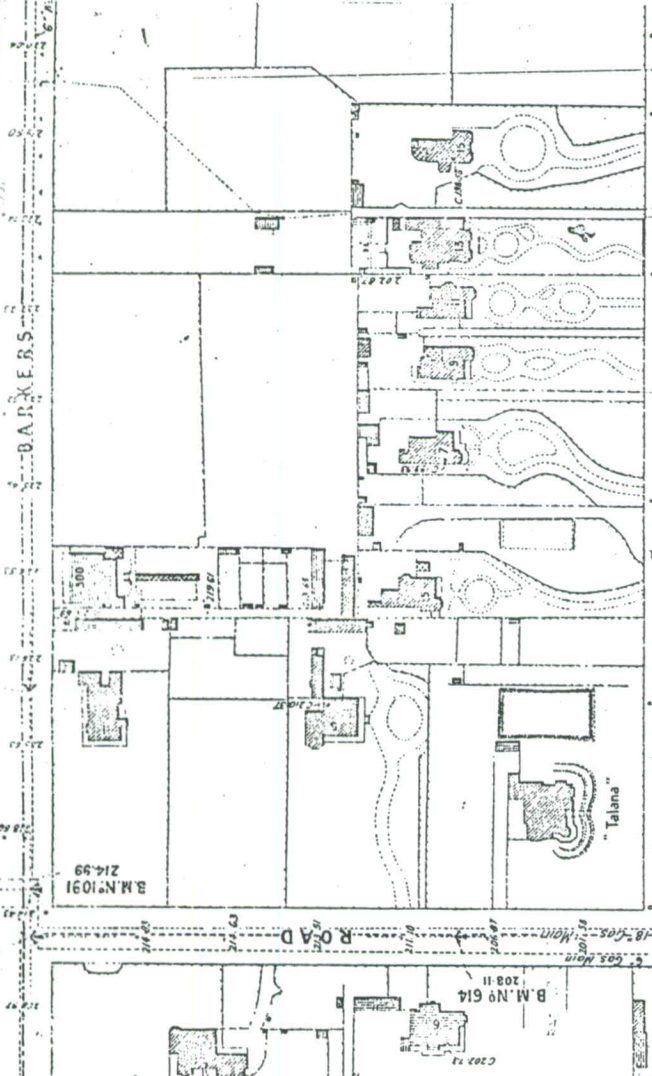
Hawthorn
17.5

R.P.
3.4



Hawthorn
Conservation
Harcourt Street Area

MMBW 160-1" (1902)
From "Hawthorn #4, Bally
Harcourt Street Area"
Study, 1975



PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM - PRIVATE GARDENS

ADDRESS 7 Harcourt Street
Hawthorn

TITLE "MURTOA"
former "Lexinton"

EXISTING DESIGNATION HBR [] AHC [] NT [] SIGN. T. [] VGS []

STREETSCAPE LEVEL 1 [X] 2 [] 3 []

GRADING A [] B [] C [] D [X] E []

RECOMMENDED FOR HBR [] AHC [] SIGNIFICANT TREE REG. [] PSP []
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE [] URBAN CONSERVATION AREA [X]

SURVEY DATE 28.11.91

NEG FILE EA2/7A-8

Title

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THEME

- [] Early Settlement
 [X] Mansions
 [X] Victorian Garden Suburb
 [] Municipal dev.
 [] 1870s growth
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 [] Commercial Centres
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 [] Flats and Offices

DETAILS

Date 1877

Designer

Layout/Structures

Assymetrical driveway with central return. Front fence removed, pillars left.
 Large cedar in front lawn, shrub border along front boundary. Service driveway on eastern side of property. 1903 MMBW Plan 1560 shows similar layout confirming that original layout is still intact.

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

Property contributes to streetscape.

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

ALTERATIONS Fence removed, contemporary plantings.

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.