

PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM - PRIVATE GARDENS

ADDRESS 29 Harcourt Street
Hawthorn

TITLE "Rotha"

EXISTING DESIGNATION HBR AHC NT SIGN. T. VGS

STREETSCAPE LEVEL 1 2 3

GRADING A B or C D E

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

SURVEY DATE 28.11.91

NEG FILE EA3/2

Title

Vol.

Fol.

THEME

Photo: see attached.

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

DETAILS

Date 1887

Designer

Layout/Structures

MMBW 1903 Map, No. 1560, shows curving driveway with return round island bed containing fishpond. Small paths lead off the main driveway through the garden. Fences, gates and driveway alignment are original. Some original plantings including huge Magnolia grandiflora on west side. Statue of girl in pool possibly original. Urns at front steps. Sunken tennis court on eastern side of driveway a more recent addition.

NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See attached.

INTEGRITY Good
Fair
Poor

CONDITION Good
Fair
Poor

ALTERATIONS

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated Structures []

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.

29 Harcourt Street continued

The garden of "Rotha" is of considerable local significance: 1. for its retention of the original layout as a city mansion garden and some original garden ornaments. 2. for its retention of some original plantings.

On-site inspection required.



PLACE IDENTIFICATION FORM

ADDRESS

29 Harcourt Street

TYPE

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

TITLE

"Rotha."

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 Oct. 91.
 NEG FILE 29.16, 17
 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 -

House, garden, garden features, fence.

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



NOTABLE FEATURES/SIGNIFICANCE

See Loader and Bayly, 1975 Report.
 See attached

INTEGRITY Good Fair Poor
 CONDITION Good Fair Poor

CROSS REFERENCED INFORMATION

Associated significant garden

29 HARCOURT STREET

"ROTHA'

Additional Information

"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)".¹⁸

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.

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 articled 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

¹⁸. Loder & Bayly, *Hawthorn Conservation Study, Harcourt Street Area*, 1978, p.5.

29 Harcourt Street continued

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.

Significance

State

1. A brilliant house and garden design, certainly the best in Harcourt Street and in Hawthorn by the architect John Beswicke. Significant architecturally for its flamboyant interpretation in pre Queen Anne form of Beswicke's developing standard mansion house plan.
2. 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).

29 Harcourt Street continued

3. 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.
4. Significant for its substantial contribution to the Harcourt Street mansion house precinct.



NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (VICTORIA)

RESEARCH INTO "ROTHA", 29 HARCOURT STREET, HAWTHORN

F.N. 4779

An examination of the Hawthorn Rate Books confirms that "Rotha", with its bay window and roof formed of three steep gables infilled with an intricate fretwork pattern,⁽¹⁾ at 29 Harcourt Street, Hawthorn, was built between 1887 and 1888 for John Beswicke, architect, as his own home. It is described in 1887/88 as a house in Harcourt Street North side N.A.V. £40 owned and occupied by Beswicke.⁽²⁾ The following year it is listed as a house in Harcourt Street N.A.V. £120 owned and occupied by Beswicke.⁽³⁾ By the early 1890s it is identified as a brick house of nine rooms, still N.A.V. £120 and still owned and occupied by Beswicke.⁽⁴⁾

According to Peter Watts' 1970 essay on Beswicke, the architect lived for several years prior to this date at 13 Harcourt Street designed for his parents in the early 1880s.⁽⁵⁾ Beswicke designed at least seven and possibly more buildings in Harcourt Street, which included Nos. 9,11,13,15,16 29,31 and which served as homes for various members of the Beswicke family.⁽⁶⁾

An 1895 M.M.B.W. plan of Hawthorn shows "Rotha" in an unusual formal garden setting with curving carriageways around a circular fish pond. There is a large and grand entrance in Harcourt Street and large stables at the rear of the building.⁽⁷⁾

Watts has a detailed description of the architectural design used for No. 29 with its "dominant bay window.....on the right of the entrance.....and the roof is formed of 3 steep gables infilled with an intricate fretwork pattern. The entrance and balcony above "is reminiscent of his earlier designs.

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- (1) Peter Watts 1970 essay. (copy held)
 - (2) Town of Hawthorn RB 1887/88 No. 2050
 - (3) Ibid. 1888/89 No.2409
 - (4) Ibid. 1892 No. 3705
 - (5) P. Watts' essay, p 41 (copy held)
 - (6) Ibid. and G. McWilliam correspondence on F.N. 2994
 - (7) 1895 MMBW plan, Hawthorn (copy held)

"The section to the left of the entrance, with its conical tower, points to the towers and more sculptural form of the later houses." (8)

A remarkable feature of the house is the intact state of its interiors. A search is underway to discover data relating to the acquisition of furnishings. (9)

"Rotha" has remained in the hands of the Beswicke family. By the 1920s it was listed as owned by the Estate of J. Beswicke and occupied by Mary A. Beswicke. (10)

More recently, the building was owned and occupied by Rupert Beswicke. Currently, since Rupert's death, it is in the hands of his executors.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS JOHN BESWICKE (1847 - 1906?)

John Beswicke, architect, was born 30 November 1847, the son of Charles and Eliza Beswicke, settlers, of "Moodie Yallo". Previously, Charles and James were retailers and drapers in Collins Street.

John was educated at Geelong Grammar School and articled to Crouch and Wilson, architects and surveyors. In the 1880s he designed a house for his parents at 13 Harcourt Street, Hawthorn. (11) In 1883 the Crouch and Wilson partnership was dissolved. Beswicke entered into a partnership with Wilson until his ^{Wilson} death in 1887. In 1886 Beswicke toured the United Kingdom and Europe making a special study of architecture and sanitation in the various countries. The firm of Beswicke and Hutchins was formed in 1889 and Beswicke and Coote in 1890. From 1893 Beswicke practised alone. The last entry for Beswicke in The Architects Index is in 1906.

The Architects Index contains 85 entries for John Beswicke (1871 - 1888), six for Wilson and Beswicke (1884-1886), 15 for Beswicke and Hutchins (1889-1890) and 17 for Beswicke and Coote (1890-1893).

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- (8) Watts, p 4 (copy held)
(9) La Trobe Library inquiry staff are searching.
(10) City of Hawthorn RB 1928/29 Glenferried Ward No.7222
(11) F.N. 2994

Buildings designed by Beswicke include:

- (1) Public Buildings. Brighton Town Hall (1885),
Malvern Town Hall (1885), Hawthorn
Town Hall (1888), Dandenong Town
Hall (1890)
- (2) Houses 9,11,13,15,16,29,31 Harcourt Street
(1870s-1880s)
- (3) Churches Presbyterian Church, Alma Street,
St. Kilda (1885)
Wesleyan Church, Camberwell Road,
Camberwell.
- (4) Commercial
Buildings Australian Property and Investment
Co. Ltd. NW cnr. Flinders Lane
and Elizabeth Street. In association
with Oakden, Addison and Kemp (1889)
Glen Picture Theatre (now Glen
Centre), Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn. (

(12) See sources listed below

LIST OF SOURCES

Cyclopedia of Victoria, vol 3, p 273

MS. William, G, Hawthorn Peppercorns

MMBW plan Hawthorn No. 1560, 1895 (copy held)

The Architects Index (La Trobe Library)

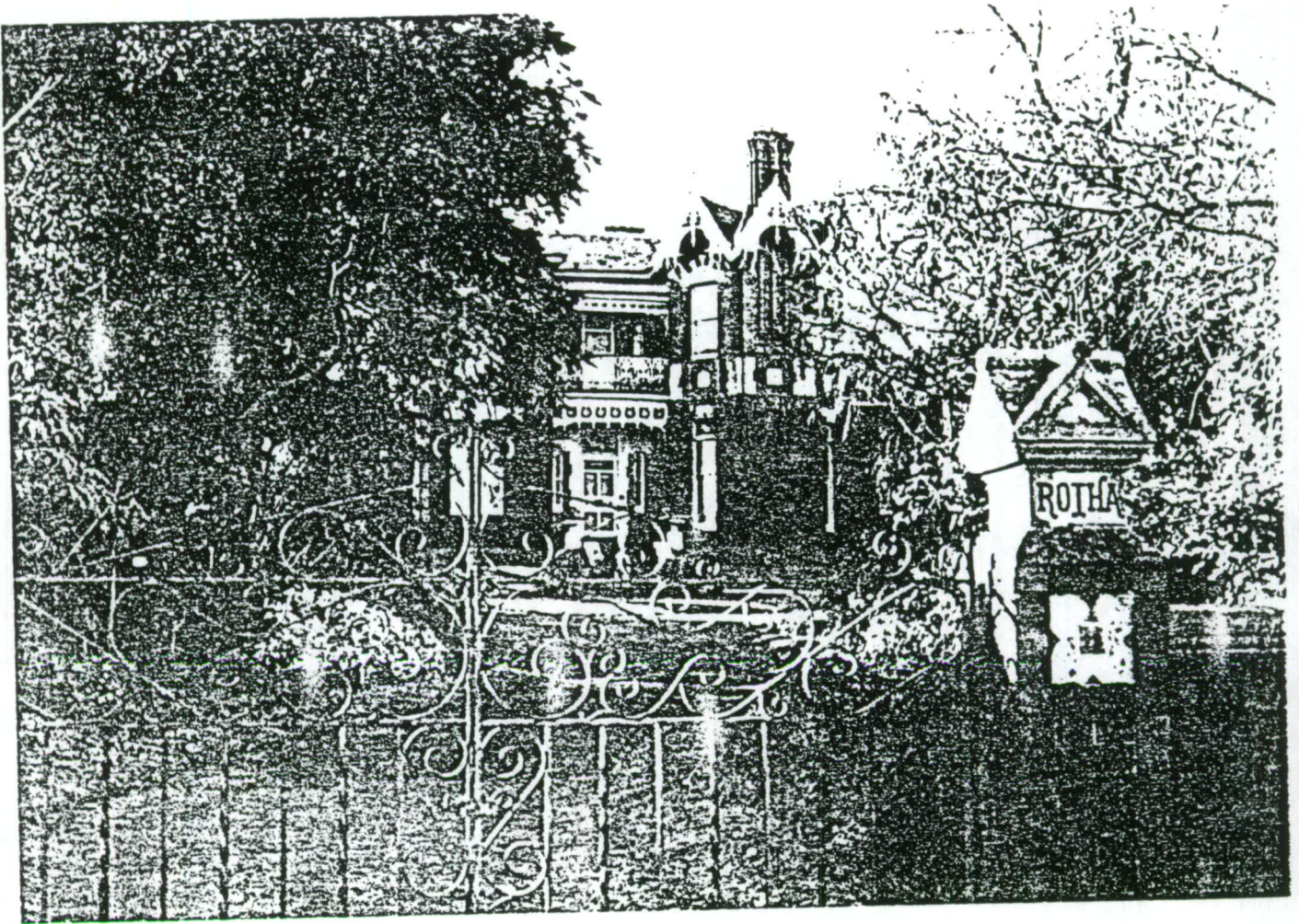
Victoria and its Metropolis, vol 2, 1888

Watts, Peter, John Beswicke, M.U.A.S. essay 1970 (copy held)

Hawthorn Rate Books (P.R.O)

C. KELLAWAY

24 Sept. 1980.



"Rotha", No. 29 Harcourt Street.

No. 23 Harcourt Street

This building, of 1940s date, on the corner of Higham Road, is so close to the street that it intrudes markedly into the streetscape and cannot be readily screened.

Nos. 25 and 27 Harcourt Street

These two post-First World War buildings again create the contrasting typical mid-wars suburban street character, with buildings set relatively close to the street. Even though No. 25 is two-storied, the fairly well-developed planting in front of both buildings minimises their intrusion, and further development of this planting or the extension of evergreen street trees through this section of the street would effectively further minimise their intrusion.

* "Rotha", No. 29 Harcourt Street

Built in 1888, architect - John Beswicke.

This building appears to be the best and most intact specimen of John Beswicke's work. The polygonal section and the introduction of a diagonal emphasis presage one of the most prevalent characteristics of Australian Queen Anne or Federation Style architecture. It is not unique in this, but

it is a good example of the tendency for the general principles of asymmetrical picturesque composition as developed in Britain to be translated into a more stereotyped (but sometimes more fantastic) corner tower form late in the century, especially in some examples of the American Stick Style. The translation of this corner emphasis back into red brick and tile and into single storey dwellings, was to be a major element in our own Federation Style.

In "Rotha" the diagonal emphasis is not fully developed because a smaller turret at the other end of the facade provides some balance to it. The polygonal section is interesting because of the bold placing of the chimney on what one would expect to be the main side, thus blinding it; also for the elaborate series of gables with elaborate decorative carpentry work of English late mediaeval inspiration. The smaller turret has a candlesnuffer roof with a slight bellcast profile, and some of the main roof ridging, notably on the low section to the east, retains its wrought iron finials and decorative cresting.

The front fence appears to still be of the original Victorian brick and the front garden retains most of the original details of its layout, modified mainly by the asphalt sealing of the driveway and the loss of some of its small visual landscape tricks and details.

* No. 31 Harcourt Street

Built in 1883, architect - John Beswicke.

This building is constructed in dark red brickwork with round arcading of red brick voussiors, but apparently with the label moulds and cement impostes painted an uncharacteristic orangey-buff colour and with a more recent red brick balustrading to the verandah. The verandah itself has a modern glazed infilling and the expected roof cresting and finials are absent.

The house is typically well set back on its typical deep block, with the house further concealed by extensive plantings. The high brick fence is of very recent origin and, notwithstanding some respect for traditional Victorian brick fence details, the fence's recent origin is readily apparent. The typical view, through an open grill iron gate and along a sweeping drive, has now been lost through the use of a new solid timber gate. Replacement of this gate with an open iron type would be of some benefit in minimising the non-historic attributes of this site.

Nos. 33, 33a Harcourt Street

These modest between-wars villas are inconspicuously painted and well-concealed by landscaping. The high fence of No. 33A is of marginal consequence.

From Loder and Bayly,
Hawthorn Conservation Study

Wrixon

Mr Walker
56.20 4.

Mr

ROAD.
Mr Everest

Mr David

HARCOURT STREET.
22.50

Mr Larett
70
Mr Stackpoole
56.20

Mr J. Slater

BATHMINES ROAD.
28.00
92
A. R. P.
30.. 3.. 0

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

VICTORIA ROAD.
9.50
95
A. R. P.
26.. 2.. 76
Mr Biggs
28.00

Mr J. Walster
94
A. R. P.
26.. 3.. 56
28.20

BURWOOD ROAD.
9.50
96
A. R. P.
21.. 0.. 0

97
A. R. P.
21.. 0.. 24
9.50

99
A. R. P.
21.. 0.. 0
9.50

98
A. R. P.
21.. 0.. 24
9.50

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

RIVE DALE ROAD.

5a

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

Hawthorn Conservation
Harcourt Street Area

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.
Parsonage

105a
1.00

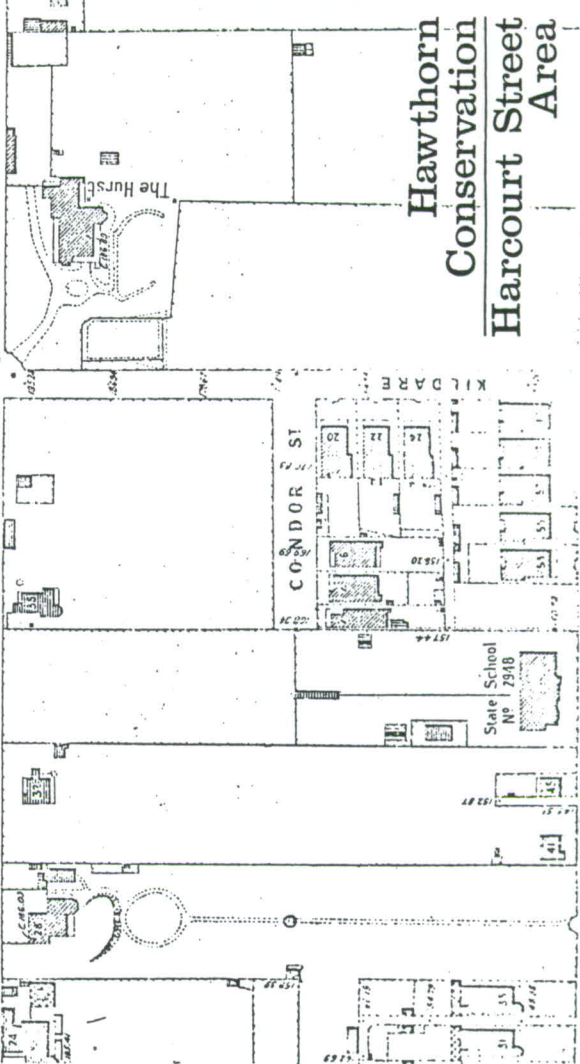
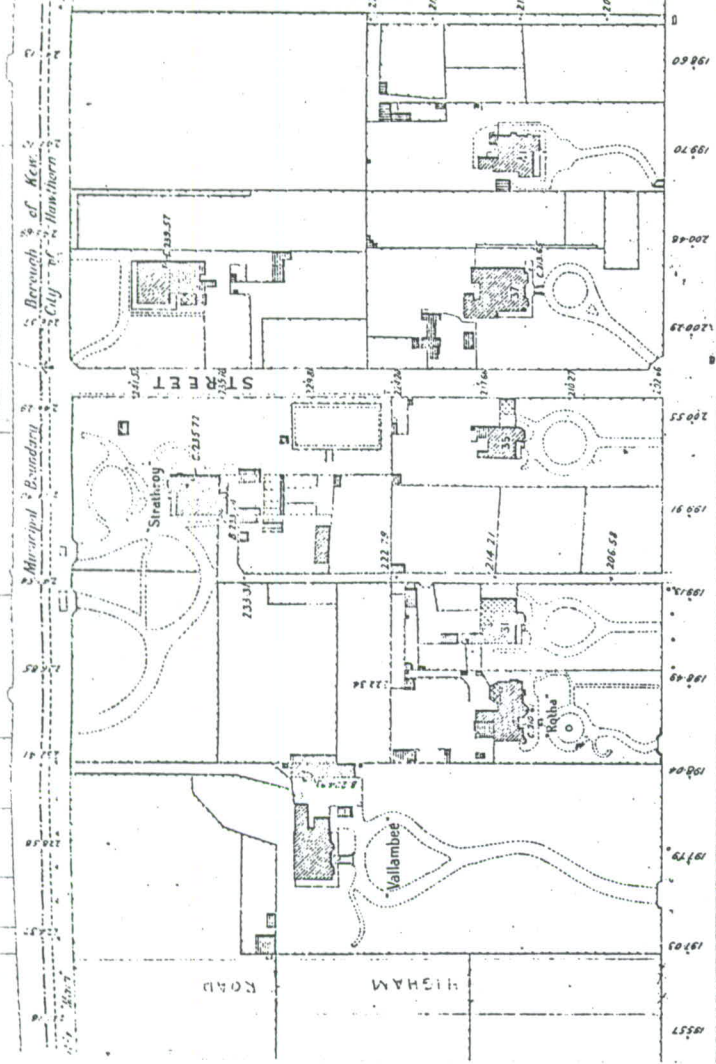
A. R. P.
40.. 0.. 0

Borough Map (part) 1866
From Loder & Bayler
Conservation Study
105a
17.5

Hawthorn 17.5

R.P.
3.4

A
R
A
R
A
Z



Hawthorn
Conservation
Harcourt Street
Area

MMBW 160'-1" (1902)
From "Lepidoptera" by Bailey,
Harcourt Street, Hawthorn
July 1975

