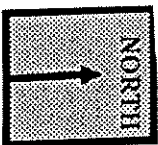
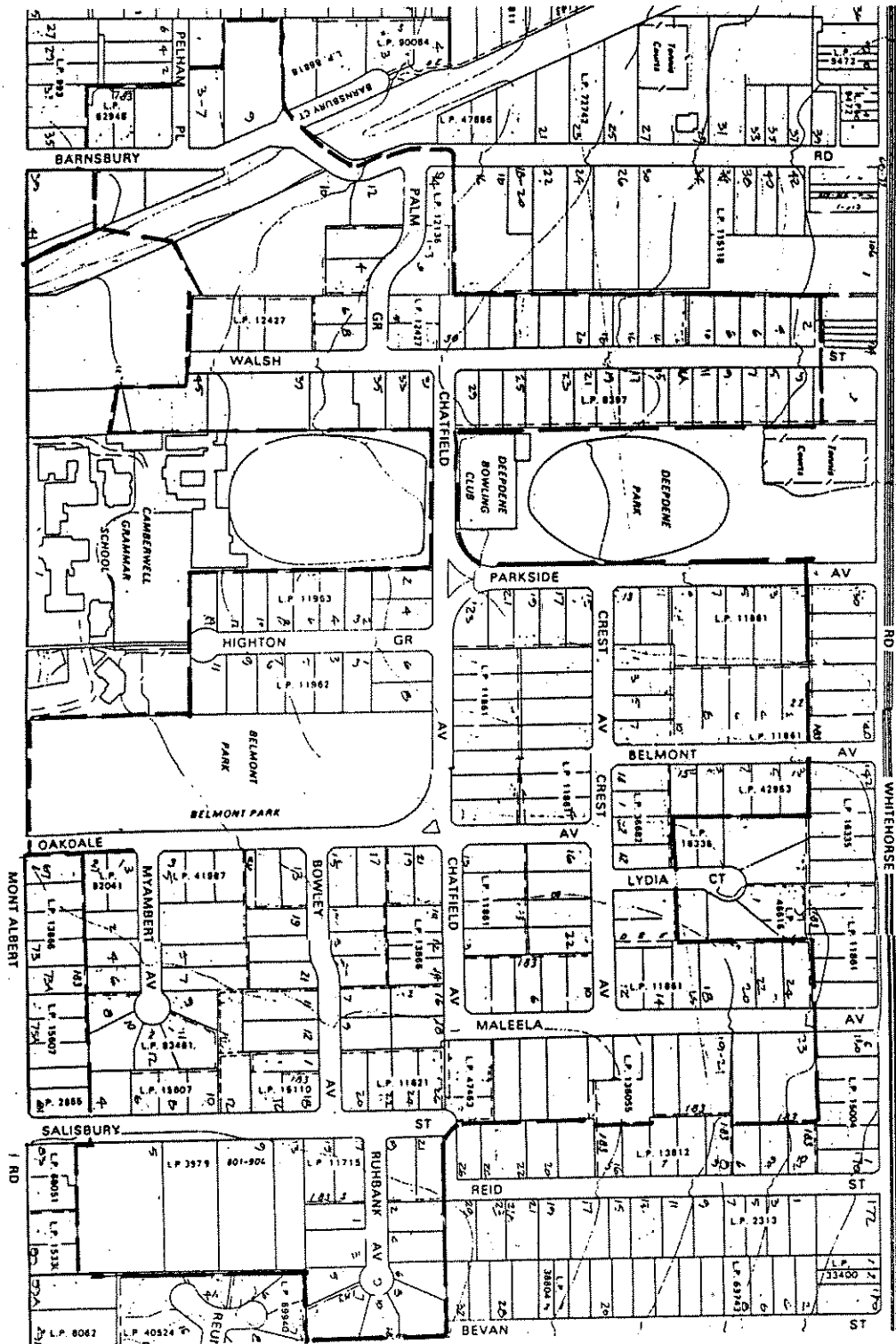


Precinct 18, Reid estate, later Central Park, Belmont Heights and Cotham Hill estates



CITY OF CAMBERWELL URBAN CONSERVATION STUDY
1986, 1991

1986: P. Sanders P/L & Graeme Butler 1991: Dr Chris McConville & Graeme Butler

Precinct 18, Reid estate, later Central Park, Belmont Heights and Cotham Hill estates

History

Comprised of three main 20th century estates, Central Park (1922), Belmont Heights and Cotham Hill (1926), the housing there expresses another decade on.¹ H.C. Crouch surveyed the north section (Belmont Heights), contained by Parkside, the well-treed Belmont Park and Maleela Avenue. Buyers could depend on a 'Superior Class of Residence' as neighbours because of the brick area by-law. It was claimed as the highest land in the district, with perfect drainage, glorious panoramic views, well served by trams and trains, equipped with all ser-

vices, 'touching' two public parks (Belmont and Balwyn Parks) and near sporting facilities, ecclesiastical and educational institutions.²

The most telling quote from sales promotion was the proud statement that municipalities had set minimum 50 feet frontages and limited one house to a lot... 'The consequence being that Melbourne is going to cover a greater area than any of the World's Modern Cities. Visualize what will be the value of land within 6.1/4 miles of the city during the next ten years...'³

Other parts of the precinct include Walsh Street (Central Park Estate), declared by J.G. Gillespie in 1922 and Salisbury Street (Gillespie in 1926). An older estate



18 CHATFIELD AVENUE- AN UNUSUAL OLD ENGLISH STYLE HOUSE, SITED ON A CONCRETE ROADWAY

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- 1 LPs 11861, 9397, 11621
 - 2 Sale Plan H2 202 553530 CCL
 - 3 *ibid.*

was Cotham Hill, containing Reid and Bevan Streets. It was declared by W.H. Flood in the late 1880s but has been reputedly resold at a much later date under the title of the Reid Estate.¹ Sale posters of the 1880s show Robert Reid Esquire's house facing Whitehorse Road, close to Burke Road (still there? 936?) Reid was the principal of Robert Reid & Co., importers, warehousemen and manufacturers, of Flinders Street.²

The 1904 MMBW plan shows the area undivided with the Surrey Hotel facing Whitehorse Road, at the area's north-west corner, and large villas such as Kaleno and Roystead at the southern perimeter of the precinct.³

Sites in the area are both individually significant and representative of the 1930s; i.e., 1 Chatfield Avenue, 20 Walsh Street (1936), 8 and 26 Reid Street (1938).

Street period expression of identified sites from the era 1916-40 with those from the era 1926-40 in brackets:

Belmont Avenue 100%⁴
 Bowley Avenue 100% (99%)⁵
 Chatfield Avenue 100% (94%)⁶
 Crest Avenue 94% (93%)⁷
 Highton Grove 100%⁸
 Maleela Avenue 100%⁹
 Oakdale Avenue 100%¹⁰
 Palm Grove 100%¹¹
 Parkside Avenue 100% (83%)¹²
 Reid Street 100% (94%)¹³
 Salisbury Street 71% (42%)¹⁴
 Walsh Street 100% (93%)¹⁵

Historic Themes:

Process of subdivision, sale and building over several decades. Influence of building controls to ensure distinctive quality. ie.

- (i) changes in urban form, land tenure and subdivision
- (v) typical residential lifestyles and their physical expression

Description

Oakdale Avenue

Oakdale Avenue has concrete roads and adjoins Belmont Park. Character of the street commences at Bowley Avenue and then continues on with 1930s era housing of Moderne and Old English revival style. Number 17 may be a J A L Humphries design.

Crest Avenue

The street has concrete roads and Camphor Laurel street trees. The 1930s housing character continues, but with more interesting development and lesser scale of dwelling. Number 8 is one of the individually significant houses in a Georgian revival character. This character is not as strong at the east end.

Maleela Street

The street has a concrete road, notable street trees of Pin Oaks and mature exotic trees and gardens combining to provide a landscape quality. Large 1920s, 30s and 40s villas predominate. However mixed development prevails, with some new development between the period houses.

Among the significant examples is Number 18, a Mediterranean villa style house, and Number 17, an Old English style house. Number 1 Maleela Avenue is also another notable house, with particularly notable fence and agapanthus planting.

Chatfield Avenue

The street has a dominant 1930s character with Old English style and some Moderne examples, such as Number 19. The road is concrete paved. All houses are large and detached, Number 11 being particularly notable (corner of Chatfield and Oakdale) also Number 9.

Highton Grove

The street has concrete roads, with lamp standards set in the median at the end of the cul-de-sac. There are many individually notable houses, reputedly built and designed by Basil Hayler, including Mediterranean villa styles, Spanish villa styles and other Bungalow-oriented designs.

Walsh Street

The street has concrete roads, many individually notable houses, in the Old English style and of brick and stucco. Also, on the east side, Bungalow-oriented and Mediterranean style houses, and many original fences and gardens.

One individually notable house is an Indian Bungalow style house, Number 43, with unpainted stucco and mature exotic garden.

- 1 See LP2313
- 2 D1890
- 3 MMBW RP70
- 4 street % 1916-40 is 40%
- 5 street % 1916-40 is 77%
- 6 street % 1916-40 is 89%
- 7 street % 1916-40 is 72%
- 8 street % 1916-40 is 100%
- 9 street % 1916-40 is 66%
- 10 street % 1916-40 is 33%
- 11 street % 1916-40 is 87%
- 12 street % 1916-40 is 52%
- 13 street % 1916-40 is 75%
- 14 street % 1916-40 is 22%
- 15 street % 1916-40 is 76%

Palm Grove

The street is a continuation of the Spanish/Mediterranean villa and Old English style, all being large houses of brick and stucco construction.

Salisbury Street

Starting with Number 1, on the east side, the street has a group of individually notable houses ending at 7. All are notable but not of a similar construction date. The street has a patch of individually notable Old English houses, Numbers 22, 24, 26 being a notable group. Number 21 is a similar scale, opposite.

Bowley Avenue

The street has a concrete roadway at Salisbury Street, Old English style mixed with Georgian revival houses of the 1930s and 40s, plus new unrelated development, particularly on the south side.

Ruhbank Avenue

The street has a concrete roadway and the Old English style is dominant among the houses. There is a median at the end of the cul-de-sac and later Georgian revival houses at the end, unrelated to the Old English but sharing some of the stucco character of the earlier houses in the rest of the estate.

Reid Street

Mixed development, with some individually notable Old English style houses on the west side. The street does not form part of the Precinct.

Belmont Avenue

The street has a concrete roadway but the street does not form part of the Precinct.

Parkside Avenue

The street has a concrete roadway, east side only, facing the park on the west. It has a mixture of late 1920s, early 1930s houses, including 9, with unpainted stucco and mature original garden.

Myambert Avenue

Presumably carved from the grounds of the Reid family's former house, Myambert, at number one Myambert Avenue, this street contains houses which concur with the rest of the estate in age and style with the Old English style dominating. A notable element is the old gum at the end of the street, retained on a median formed by the turning radius, which expresses some of the aims of the Reids for Belmont Park, in keeping the native vegetation.

Barnsbury Road

Straddling the railway line in its connection to the precinct, the street contains individually significant houses (number 9) as well as contributory sites (1920s-30s). Canonbury's garden has a further unifying effect with its mature growth and visibility.

Significance

A good example of the impact of local site control regulations with minimum 50 feet frontages. It is an example of the manner in which the large 1880s properties were often not divided until the inter-war years of the twentieth century. This precinct demonstrates the

process of subdivisions and building common in much of Camberwell.

Historically the process of subdivision, sale and building over two decades is evident along with the influence of building controls to ensure distinctive quality. The result is a perceivable middle-class enclave, housing over the years a number of important Victorians.

Architecturally the housing includes individually important examples and is significant as a notable group of mainly 1930s designs of a wide range of styles set in a contemporary context of concrete roadways and landscape.

Historically significant as an example of 1930s estate development, with a comparatively high degree of integrity.

Important as a high-quality estate with a full range of the characteristic housing styles of the 1930s and with the period character extended into street form (especially the use of concrete) and plantings. These have survived here where they have been lost in other estates.

A good example of the impact of local site control regulations with minimum 50 feet frontages. It demonstrates some of the characteristic aspects of subdivision and building in Camberwell. The delay between subdivision in the 1880s and building in the 1920s; the impact of public transport on subdivision and sale; the emphasis on rural qualities and views in descriptions of the estate and the superior quality of the buildings themselves. Especially important are the nostalgic Old English styles so closely associated with the character of Camberwell.