

Precinct 1, Riverside Estate



CITY OF CAMBERWELL URBAN CONSERVATION STUDY
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Precinct 1

History

Known as the Riverside Estate in the late 1930s¹, it was initiated just before the war (1914) by surveyor, E.P. Muntz. Containing Cascade, Riverside, Inverness, Walbundry and The Boulevard, the estate coincided with others which sought to tap the new-found access created by riverside government road construction schemes.

For example, estate agent Peter Keam supported the Yarra River beautification scheme of 1913- which included construction of a number of 'Boulevards' along the river and river bank landscaping (some of which is still evident). Keam also developed the two Griffin designed estates which fronted the river at Mt. Eagle.²

However, like the Griffin estates, much of the housing in the Riverside estate dates from significantly later. Late 1930s and early 1940s houses predominate with some from the 1950s. Period expression for the post Second

War era (c1941-55) is as follows (1931-40 period percentage shown in brackets when significant):

Cascade Street 54% (31% 1931-40)

Inverness Way 26% (63% 1931-40)

Kyora Parade 42% (50% 1931-40)

Riverside Avenue 39% (54% 1931-40)

The Boulevard 63%

Walbundry Avenue 21% (50% c1931-40)

Architecturally, this spread across the Second War period has not interrupted the stylistic preferences of Moderne or Old English; the former style or its derivation continuing as the dominance in the 1950s. Although not as visually homogeneous as the Bungalow suburbs, most of the houses are larger and many individually important architecturally.

Historic Themes:

- (i) changes in urban form, land tenure and subdivision
- (iii) transport links and modes and their impact on residential and commercial development



15 Walbundry Avenue

¹ G. McWilliam plan, CCL
² Mt. Eagle 1914; Glenard, 1916, see Butler, *Heidelberg Conservation Study*, 1985, p.132f

(v) typical residential lifestyles and their physical expression

Description

Walbundry Avenue

The street has a concrete roadway, notable street trees (Queensland Brush Box), brick and stucco villas in the Old English and Moderne style which form the foundation of the area, but also an early Indian Bungalow at Number 38 precedes the general character in period. Individually notable examples include Numbers 28, 17, 15 and 13; 15 being a distinctive Moderne style house, and Number 11 also a distinctive Old English style. Despite core development, extensive redevelopment of sites, but generally speaking in a similar scale to the large comfortable villas seen elsewhere in the street.

Wattle Avenue

The street has a concrete roadway, Queensland Brush Box street trees but few frontages exist on Wattle Avenue.

Riverside Avenue

Large villas, mainly stucco and brick, and many in the Old English style, such as Number 5. Some houses are also in the Moderne style, such as Number 3 and Georgian revival, such as Number 6. Street trees are Camphor Laurel, and therefore empathetic to the period. A notable **Moderne** style group is Numbers 22-26. East of the **Boulevard**, housing becomes more mixed in period, less contributory houses, although still possessing the same scale.

Inverness Way

East of the Boulevard, a fair percentage of Moderne style, mainly two-storey brick houses. West of the Boulevard, the street has a concrete roadway with street avenue trees (lilly-pilly). The Old English style, as exemplified by Numbers 38 and 36, is mixed with Moderne style houses such as Numbers 34 and 32. A remnant Bungalow from the first subdivision stage, is Number 18 (brick, probably late 1920s) and a Mediterranean villa style house at Number 10 is also individually notable. Also, a Spanish villa at Number 8, is individually notable, as is Number 6, an individually notable Moderne style example.

The Boulevard

The Boulevard is characterized by large detached brick, mainly two-storey villas, stucco and Moderne or Old English in style, also, newer development.

Cascade Street

Impressive street tree avenue (oak), with Moderne style house **examples** at 21 and 19, also 17, 20 and 18, plus Old English **examples** at 11, 12 and 13.

Kyora Parade, Mount View Grove.

Few frontages on to the street.

Burke Road

Extensive Old English and Moderne style houses. Number 1170 is an example of the Old English, with Italian villa style intermixed, such as Number 1162. South of Walbundry, the whole block has been redeveloped.

Doncaster Road

Contains large hip-roof houses, some Moderne style such as Numbers 19 and 25 also Bungalow style as seen at

Number 29 (with Chevron pattern glazing bars), intermixed with later, more austere, and more pedestrian houses. Examples of styles used include Number 47 (Bungalow), Number 51 (Moderne) and Numbers 5 and 57 have Mediterranean villa styling.

Bulleen Road

Bulleen Road has some remnant Edwardian houses along with the later Georgian revival and Moderne style (Number 5), on the corner of the Boulevard.

Riverview Road

Mixed development of Moderne and Old English style from the 1930s, Old English examples being Number 16 and the notable Number 22. There is a Mediterranean villa style house at Number 25. Cityview Road also has a cohesive collection on the east side of Moderne style stucco brick houses, all of an intermediate size. On the west side there are similar houses, but generally speaking they are later. Individually notable examples include Number 3.

Significance

Historically this area has importance in expressing the characteristics of Camberwell's building 'boomlet' of the 1930s and the fashionable, forward-looking suburb of the 1950s. Balwyn earned a reputation as a modern and desirable suburban area in the expansion of the 1950s. The location of this precinct on the slope leading to the Yarra Valley, the views towards distant mountains still visible from several streets and the complexity of its styles and scale of its buildings demonstrate the pretensions of the rising upper middle class of the 1950s.

This area is much more than simply a collection of large home. The precinct evokes the character of pre-post-World War 2 Balwyn, perhaps Melbourne's most fashionable new suburb. After 1945 it emerged as a favourite home to the aspiring new professionals and commercial figures of Melbourne. This precinct combines a 1950s faith in modernity with the familiar Anglo-Nostalgic styles of Camberwell. As such it reveals much about the aspirations of Balwyn and Camberwell, between the 1930s and 1950s.

The precinct reflects the historical themes of 1930s and 1950s Modern and nostalgic building styles; the building boom of the later-1930s and the character of Camberwell as an upper middle class district in the 1950s. North Balwyn has become identified as a typical home to the wealthy of post-War Melbourne. This precinct is a perfect example of the domestic qualities aspired to in this era and in the last years before the War. As such it has an historical importance as a reminder of the aspirations shared by many in those years.

Architecturally, the large detached house in its various 1930s styles is the focus of the precinct's significance, surrounded by period landscape (street trees) and the concrete roads which identify specifically with 1920s-30s estates. Added to the strong group character, the precinct also has individually important sites.