

## Identification and location

**Name of place:** Elm street tree avenue

**Other Name** Ulmus sp.'

**Address** 97 nr Ballarat Road

Maidstone

**Place Identifier** 21808

**Heritage Significance** City

**Creation date(s)** 1910-1920c

**Map (Melway)** 27H12

**Boundary description** The trees and sufficient land around it to allow for root zone and canopy protection, nominally 1m beyond the drip line, root zone or canopy perimeter which ever is the greatest.

**Local Government Area** City of Maribyrnong

**Ownership Type** Public

## Description

**Site Type:** Trees, street

### Physical Description

This incomplete avenue of 28 elm ('Ulmus' sp.) street trees is located on both sides of Ballarat Rd, near Rosamond Road, and probably dates from the early 20th century. Street trees of this age are now rare in the city. At the east end the avenue starts near the Catholic Church with 14 trees on each side of the road extending westward, with evident gaps in their spacing. The trees are set approximately 2.6m from the building line, in a grassed median which may have been added after planting.

### Condition

good (partially disturbed, well preserved)

### Integrity

partially intact/intrusions

### Context

Mixed housing with Edwardian-era and inter-war periods evident.

### Threats:

Pruning for added and existing service lines, pollution, removal with maturity, road widening, adjoining development.

## History

An observer writing in the 'Williamstown Chronicle' of 1880 noted of Footscray that, 20 years before, there had been 'scarcely a tree to be seen and the place looked as bare as an earthen pot'. Since that time street tree planting (mainly elms by observation of surviving trees) had shown its value although the writer noted an unwarranted pause in municipal planting. { FHS newsletter }

The Curator's (David Matthews) report on street trees in 1933, noted many complaints about suckering of the root system of elms and poplars (silver poplars). He also noted that the Oriental plane ('Platanus orientalis') had been extensively used. This tree was subject to the Plane Tree Disease and troubled by borer along with the elms. These trees had been planted for over twenty years and Matthews observed that, had the varieties selected proved more suitable, the streets would have been furnished with well grown trees and would have been giving pleasure instead of annoyance to the ratepayers. He was forced to conclude that elms, poplars and planes were unsuitable but that surviving trees should be preserved for as long as possible until they could be replaced.

This report was the turning point in street tree planting policy and the result of the maturity of the trees planted in the late Victorian-era and Edwardian-era, plus the spreading network of overhead wires. New electric street lighting was being obscured by tree canopies- the canopies and the trees under them had to go. An aerial view taken by Charles Daniel Pratt, photographer, around the 1930s-40s shows mature tree avenues in Cowper, Bunbury, and Whitewall Streets and Moreland Road. Another aerial view of 1931 shows the same. The 1945 aerial views show many street trees in Footscray and Yarraville. Most of these trees have gone.

The MMBW Detail Plan of this area from the mid 1890s shows no street trees but by 1945 the trees were mature and more extensive than today. It is assumed that this planting occurred early in the Edwardian-era tree planting surge which preceded the discontinuation of elms as likely street trees under Matthews in the 1930s and the onset of overhead wiring for services.

Surviving mature 20th century street trees in the former Footscray municipality today also include elms in Stephen and Bunbury Streets.

### Thematic context

|                                   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Australian Principal Theme</b> | Developing cultural institutions and ways of life |   |
| <b>PAHT Subtheme</b>              | Creating public landscape                         | <b>Local Theme(s)</b> Developing Local Government, Main Roads |

### Cultural Significance

This elm street tree avenue is significant to the City of Maribyrnong because:  
 - it is a relatively large remnant of the early 20th century street tree planting regime in the

municipality ( Criterion A4);  
- it is a reflection of the renewed prosperity of the area after the 1890s depression ( Criterion A4); and  
- it is a remnant of early street tree planting which was once more widespread but has been severely reduced over time within the City ( Criterion B2).

### Comparative Examples:

Elms of a greater size can be seen at 31-33 Somerville Rd and at the Hyde St Primary School, with comparable size examples in Stephen St and Fairlie St as street trees. There is no other comparable elm avenue in the City in terms of tree numbers.

### Recommendations

Heritage Victoria Register   
Register of the National Estate:   
National Trust Register:   
Other Heritage Listings   
Planning Scheme Protection   
External Paint Controls Apply?:   
Internal Alteration Controls Apply?:   
Tree Controls Apply?:   
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Act:   
Are there Outbuildings or Fences not Exempt?:   
Prohibited Uses may be Permitted

### Recommendations:

The following management objectives have been drawn from the Statement of Significance:

- to conserve and enhance the listed trees at the place and the row planting pattern where enhancement includes replacement of missing original components in the planting scheme;
- to conserve and enhance the visual relationship between the trees;
- to conserve and enhance the public view of these trees;
- to ensure that new planting, works or elements near the place are visually recessive and related to the trees;
- to ensure that replacement trees in the row are similar species; and
- to further research the detailed origins of the tree rows to maintain the link with their history, via promotion and publication of the findings.

### Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

*A4 Importance for their association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the*

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| <i>human occupation and evolution of the nation, state, region or community.</i>   |
| as a remnant of the early 20th century street tree planting regime, parallel with the renewed prosperity of the area   |
| <i>B2 Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practiced, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest.</i> |
| as a remnant of the early 20th century street tree planting which was once widespread but has been severely reduced over time within the City  |

historical significant    architectural significant    social significance    scientific significant

## Documentation

### References

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| Botanica' CD Rom 1997 (Beaver Multimedia P/L, Random House Australia)<br>Butler, 1989. City of Footscray Urban Conservation Study;<br>State Library of Victoria MMBW Detail Plan<br>Footscray Council committee minutes (VPRO) VPRS 005337 |
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## Data recording

Assessed By: 

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| F Gilfedder, Graeme But |
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Assessed Date: 

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| 7/2000 |
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