

## Identification and location

**Name of place:** **Pepper trees, sugar gums, kurrajongs and Canary Island date palms, Maribyrnong River plantation**

**Other Name** `Phoenix canariensis', `Schinus molle' var. `areira', `Eucalyptus cladocalyx', `Brachychiton' sp.

**Address** off  Chifley Dr  
 Maribyrnong

**Place Identifier**  21746

**Heritage Significance:**  Regional

**Creation date(s):**  1926-1930c **Map (Melway)**  28D7

**Boundary description** The trees and sufficient land around each 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

The parkland along the Maribyrnong River has traditionally been the scene of leisure activities, swimming and boating. The landscape includes pepper trees ('Schinus molle' var. 'areira'), sugar gums ('Eucalyptus cladocalyx') and extensive Canary Island date palms ('Phoenix canariensis') combined into a long row and planted in a grassed river bank, in combination with mature rear yard planting from The Esplanade houses. The palms are the dominant elements in the tree group, made more dominant by the apparent removal of some of the sugar gums from the alternating pattern. Across the river is a matching palm row, making the riverscape distinctive within both municipalities.

Commencing at the Anglers Tavern and the former line of Raleigh Rd, there are two short palm rows which join at Leopold St and extend as one row on the river bank to the north end of Chifley Drive, at the former Commonwealth Explosives Factory site north east gate. There are palms on both sides of Chifley Drive at the south end of the rows, with 8 on the east and 9 on the west to where the road turns north-west. There is one mature Italian cypress within the row on the west and pepper trees mixed into the row on the east. A short row of 3 palms extends south along the river bank from the end of

Leopold St to the hotel yard.

There are a further 62 palms on the east side up to the crossing of the electrical transmission lines over the road and opposite the rear of 93 The Esplanade. After a gap near the Chicago Street intersection there are another 12 palms to the pedestrian bridge and another 7 to a gap near 157 Chifley Drive. After the gap there are 2 palms on the west side and 4 on the east until, at the end of Chifley Drive, there is a small grove of 3 palms plus a pepper tree and another 4 palms within the explosives factory site adjoining.

The Coulson Gardens adjoin the river reserve midway on the west side, with a number of pepper trees. At the Newstead Street entry to the gardens are two notable and large 'Brachychiton' specimens forming a gateway. Pepper tree rows fringe the reserve with another lesser 'Brachychiton' sp.

South of Raleigh Road and east of Van Ness Drive are a further 4 mature Canary Island date palm specimens, with pepper tree groves, set in open parklands next to the river.

### Condition

good (partially disturbed, well preserved)

### Integrity

substantially intact/some intrusions

### Context

Reinforced by the matching parklands across the river and the adjacent open space of the former explosives factory reserve. Otherwise the area is bounded by residential development of mainly post WW2.

### Threats:

Pruning for added and existing service lines, removal with maturity, carparking, root compaction, adjoining development.

### History

Despite the pollution of the Maribyrnong River by noxious industries in the nineteenth century, local citizens still used it for recreational activities, especially around the turn of the century. The Essendon Rowing Club, for example, which is now based across the river, began as the Maribyrnong Rowing Club, with its base at the Maribyrnong Bridge (originally Raleigh's Punt) Hotel, where boats were stored. It became the Essendon Rowing Club in 1888 and built a clubhouse across the river in 1920. The Footscray Rowing Club had been formed as early as 1873 {Barnard, 1999}'.

Boating for pleasure, especially for excursionists became especially popular after the tram

was extended to Maribyrnong Bridge in 1906. Charles Snelson was a boat builder who offered boats for hire just up river from the Anglers Hotel from about 1895 His boat shed was later taken over by Alfred Fitzsimmons. The Maribyrnong Motor Boat Company also had a jetty and ticket office adjacent to the Anglers Hotel from about 1907. The service was later taken over by Daniel Hicks, who ran excursion boats up the river from the Anglers Hotel to his tea gardens at Avondale Heights from 1909 to 1947. The Riverlea Tea House was also located adjacent to the Anglers Hotel { Barnard, 1999}'.

In the 1920s Maribyrnong had its own Swimming and Lifesaving Club on the river at the end of Chicago Street. Here a picket fence outlined an area for younger children and diving boards were constructed for older members. The club's facilities were demolished during World War Two . Footscray had its own swimming club also based on the Maribyrnong and formed in 1909. By 1922 it was the second largest club in the Victorian Amateur Swimming Association . When Footscray went on to open its own municipal pool in 1930, it was one of the first in suburban Melbourne { Barnard, 1999}'.

At Maribyrnong an open air cinema operated in the first decade of the twentieth century at the Riverview Tea Rooms near the Anglers Hotel. This must have been a precursor to the Sunset Drive-In which opened in Rosamond Road in the 1950s, the third drive-in to be built in Melbourne { Barnard, 1999}'.

A `Williamstown Chronicle' correspondent urged council in 1885 to beautify the (Maribyrnong) river banks and Napier Street, by making an asphalt path and tree planting, particularly around the old powder magazine. This spot (future Yarraville Gardens) was already frequented by `hundreds' on a Sunday: this was at the southern part of the river. In the north there was the establishment of Maribyrnong Park in the Essendon municipality which set the character of the present landscape in the Edwardian-era, with farmlands and industry persisting on the west side of the river.

The Melbourne Meat Preserving Co was pictured in a barren landscape in the late 1860s as a precursor to the pleasure gardens approach, with CB Fisher's Maribyrnong Park estate of the 1880s as a contrast, with its ornamental plantations north of Raleigh Rd. Individual farms took their gardens to the river's edge between these two large establishments as did the Maribyrnong Bridge Hotel and to a lesser extent the Anglers Hotel which was redeveloped late in the 19th century.

At Maribyrnong in the early twentieth century local residents, perhaps inspired by the Essendon River League across the bridge, worked to create a recreation reserve at the Maribyrnong Bridge and a boulevard on a very small part of the land that had been set aside as a recreation reserve in the Maribyrnong Park Estate of the 1880s { Barnard, 1999}'.

A photograph entitled 'New Reserve on Maribyrnong River' from c1911 shows the beginning of this area {SLV}. The increase in local population by the Edwardian-era and the increasing use of the outdoors for recreation in the post WW1 era meant the gradual development of the river banks for other than industry, farms, pleasure hotels and boating tea gardens. The growth of poplar recreational clubs such as the swimming club meant the need to keep the river clean and its banks beautified.

In 1926 the influential Metropolitan Town Planning Commission wrote to Council expressing an interest in the recent deputation to the Minister of Public Works regarding beautification of the Maribyrnong River. The commission urged co-operation of relevant councils in the preparation of a response to the Commission. Footscray Council resolved to ask Braybrook Council to convene a conference of municipal engineers as a first step towards formulating a combined plan for the beautification of the Maribyrnong River {VPRO}.

David Matthews, the Footscray Council Curator, devised a plan in 1934 to link up all of the municipal gardens (including Footscray Park) by a boulevard following on the river and connecting Ballarat Road with Fisher Parade at a point near the concrete bridge. Land was to be acquired from William Angliss.

An aerial view of 1945 shows the old and new bridge across the Maribyrnong River and the row of palms dotted along the west banks of the river and extending to the north. Some 50 trees stretched from the Anglers Hotel, along Chifley Drive to opposite Holmes Road.

### Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme	Developing cultural institutions and ways of life
PAHT Subtheme	Creating public landscape
Local Theme(s)	Reserves and parks

### Cultural Significance

Trees, Maribyrnong River plantation (pepper trees, sugar gums, 'Brachychiton' specimens, Canary Island date palm rows) are significant to the City of Maribyrnong and the Western region:

- for the collection of mature exotics introduced as pleasure grounds for the advent of increased outdoor recreation early in the 20th century (Criterion A4);
- for the rarity of a collection of trees of this maturity and number in a waterside location within the city and the region (Criterion B2);
- for the social meaning of the trees, their maturity being an indicator of use of public parklands over a long period (Criterion G1)

### Comparative Examples:

Within the region, there are the associated palms and other mature exotics on the east bank of

the Maribyrnong River and isolated tree plantations along its banks further upstream.

### 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 where enhancement would include replanting with matching specimens where gaps have occurred in the row;
- to conserve and enhance the visual relationship between trees at the place;
- to conserve and enhance the public view of these trees;
- to conserve and enhance the amenity of the place to aid in its heritage conservation;
- to ensure that new plantings or elements within the place are visually recessive and related to the trees; and
- to further research the detailed origins of the rows and 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 human occupation and evolution of the nation, state, region or community.*

collection of mature exotics introduced as pleasure grounds for the advent of increased outdoor recreation early in the 20th century

*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.*

rarity of a collection of trees of this maturity and number in a waterside location within the city and the region

## Historic Places - Significant Trees in the City of Maribyrnong

*G1 Importance as places highly valued by a community for reasons of religious, spiritual, cultural, educational or social associations.*

social meaning of the trees, their maturity being an indicator of use as public parklands over a long period

historical significanc  architectural significan  social significance  scientific significanc

### Documentation

#### References

Barnard, 1999, Historic Places Environmental History, City of Maribyrnong  
State Library of Victoria Shirley Jones collection of Victorian postcards  
Landinfo `Melbourne and Metropolitan Area project' Aerial photos 1945 Run 28A, photo 60201  
Footscray Council committee minutes (VPRO) VPRS 005337

### Data recording

Assessed By:

Assessed Date:

Historic Places - Significant Trees in the City of Maribyrnong

