

Identification and location

Name of place: Elms, street trees

Other Name Ulmus' sp.

Address 001 nr Fairlie Street

Seddon

Place Identifier 2327

Heritage Significance City

Creation date(s) 1900-1915c

Map (Melway) 42B8

Boundary description The tree 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

Two mature elm trees in the street at the corner of Barry St, framing the entry to Fairlie Street. The street has both early and reset basalt kerb and channel (3 pitcher), the kerb being approximately 5m from the building line. Other immature trees in street include hakeas.

The Ulmus genus contains 20 or so species of trees and shrubs which occur naturally in temperate regions of the northern hemisphere. During the 1920s and 1930s, and again in the 1960s and 1970s, elm trees in Europe and North America were devastated by Dutch elm disease, caused by the fungus *Ophiostoma ulmi*, which is transmitted by the elm bark beetle. Except for a few East Asian species, they are deciduous, turning yellow in fall (autumn). The leaves are usually alternate, one-sided at the base, with prominent, parallel, lateral veins and regularly toothed margins; the small, disc-like fruits have a membranous wing and are carried in clusters. Most elms are large limbed with furrowed grey bark and high, domed crowns { *Botanica* }'.

Condition

good (partially disturbed, well preserved)

Integrity

partially intact/intrusions

Context

Near Edwardian-era housing and north of the heritage overlay area.

Threats:

Pruning for added and existing service lines, removal with maturity, new crossovers, carparking, root compaction, 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 Parks & Gardens 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.

MMBW Detail Plans of this area (1895) do not show these trees but by 1945 the street trees are well established here: planting must have occurred early in the 20th century.

Surviving mature 19th century street trees in the former Footscray municipality today also include elms in Stephen and Bunbury Streets, and Ballarat Road.

Thematic context

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

Cultural Significance

These elm street trees are significant to the City of Maribyrnong:

- as remnants of the early 20th century street tree planting regime and the associated Edwardian-era prosperity in the City (Criterion A4);
- as remnants of once widespread but now severely reduced street tree planting within the City (Criterion B2).

Comparative Examples:

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 includes replacement of missing original components in the planting scheme;
- to conserve and enhance the visual relationship between trees at the place;
- to conserve and enhance the public view of these trees;
- 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 trees and maintain the link with 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.

Historic Places - Significant Trees in the City of Maribyrnong

as a remnant of the early 20th century street tree planting regime and the associated Edwardian-era prosperity in the City

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.

rare remnant of once widespread but now severely reduced street tree planting within the City

historical significant architectural significant social significance scientific significant

Documentation

References

'Botanica' CD Rom 1997 (Beaver Multimedia P/L, Random House Australia)
Butler, 1989, City of Footscray Urban Conservation Study
MMBW Detail Plans, State Library of Victoria;
Footscray Council committee minutes (VPRO) VPRS 005337

Data recording

Assessed By:

Assessed Date:

Historic Places - Significant Trees in the City of Maribyrnong

