Identification and location

Name of place: Old Footscray Township Residential Precinct

Other Name

Address bounded by Cowper, Bunbury, Hyde, Talbot and Whitehall Streets

Footscray

Place Identifier 22170   **Heritage Overlay Number 2000** HA 8

Heritage Significance City

Creation date(s) 1849-   **Map (Melway)** 42 D5

Boundary description Parts of Talbot, Hyde, Cowper, Bunbury and Whitehall Streets, with emphasis on all original Edwardian-era and Victorian-era elements, including basalt pitched paving, asphalt footpaths, street trees, lot sizes and street patterns.

Local Government Area City of Maribyrnong

Ownership Type Private & Public

Description

Site Type: Housing estate

Physical Description

The general character of the Old Footscray Township Residential Precinct is one of small Victorian & Edwardian single-storey attached and detached housing with brick and weatherboard wall cladding, corrugated iron and slate roofing, front verandahs, similar front and side setbacks and narrow block frontages. Properties originally had picket front fence and there was no provision for on-site vehicle parking for most of the identified housing. In the street there were originally asphalt footpaths and stone kerb and channel, with some surviving. The major built form was of the typical Victorian hipped roof and Edwardian hipped main roof and projecting gable roof form combination. Of the 94 places in the precinct as a whole (8, 8A), 89 are contributory.

The housing is combined with remnants of an old commercial group in Whitehall Street with some two storey and masonry construction. Street construction includes early basalt kerb and channel, with asphalt used for footpaths, particularly in Bunbury and Cowper Streets. The mature street trees (ash, elm) in Bunbury St are the best group in the city. Underlying these physical attributes is the early grid township plan running parallel to the river.

The area's physical character underscores its development history. Edwardian timber housing prevails in Talbot and Bunbury Streets; Victorian and Edwardian houses mix in Hyde Street and

the old commercial group survives in Whitehall Street, with some early commercial sites in Napier Street. Across this street is the Town Hall and other early civic sites which comprise a sub area of this early settlement.

The historical themes represented includes:

1. Transport Development: the overland routes, the railway, the railway extension and redevelopment;
2. Industrial Development (extractive, primary, secondary): early creek and riverside fell mongering and noxious trades removed from the city of Melbourne, the development of major rail and riverside secondary industries linked with the rural export trade recovery of early this century, the resort to Footscray for cheap land by the inner city industries;
3. Residential Development: grouped like the industrial sites along transport routes, road (near workplaces) or rail and then spread by the tramway and finally motor transport; and residential development which follows closely the prosperity of industry.
4. Commercial Development: follows major transport routes first as strip development; corner shops catering to local foot traffic rather than motorized.

Condition

fair (disturbed, reasonably preserved)

Integrity

partially intact/intrusions

Context

Flanked by the river and old port, aligned on the old dray track and east of the main rail corridor, the form of the precinct has been determined over its life by shifts in these transport modes.

Threats:

Unrelated development, changes to original fabric, particularly along the river's edge.

History

Some village reserves were set aside in the Parish of Cut Paw Paw when it was surveyed in 1840. These included Braybrook and Footscray. Footscray Village was not actually named until 1848. The following year Assistant Surveyor Clarke surveyed the township, creating four main blocks that were formed by Maribyrnong, Whitehall, Cowper, Wingfield and Bunbury Streets. Two years later land in these blocks was offered for sale. While some of these blocks were purchased by speculators, hoping to resell at a quick profit, by 1854 there were 100 residents in Footscray, and by 1861, 1070 residents { Barnard, 2000}.

By 1839 the Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, Captain Lonsdale, took steps to improve communication via the Saltwater River by placing a punt on the river at the village reserve for

Footscray, just north of the junction of the Saltwater and Yarra Rivers. Hoddle's 1840 map shows a punt and one track forking out towards Geelong and Williamstown, the forerunners of today's Geelong and Williamstown (or Melbourne) Roads…. Heavy traffic, such as drays would have continued to use Solomon's Ford rather than this small punt. Lonsdale's punt was soon replaced by privately-licensed punts, first operated by Thomas Watts, briefly and then, from 1840, by Benjamin Levien, who also established an inn on the Footscray side of the river, roughly where Shepherd Bridge crosses it today. Inns or hotels were integral components of the transport system in nineteenth century Victoria as they functioned primarily to provide travellers and their horses with rest and sustenance. Levien's Hotel was known as the Victoria Hotel Although Levien held onto the punt, he gave up the hotel in 1843 and it passed through the hands of three licensees and a couple of name changes before it burned down in 1848. By this time Michael Lynch had bought the punt and he moved both hotel and punt upriver, about a mile north of the township reserve of Footscray and near to the racecourse. … Another punt, operated by John O'Farrell, was located on the Maribyrnong River by 1855. By this time four more hotels had been located in the old Footscray Township: the Stanley Arms at Maribyrnong Street, the Junction Inn at the corner of Bunbury and Whitehall Streets, the Railway Hotel in Nicholson Street and the Footscray Punt Hotel (later known as the Bridge Hotel) on the corner of Maribyrnong and Wingfield Streets { Barnard, 2000}.

Of course with the adjacent Maribyrnong River, river transport would be important to the development of industry and it helped to encourage residential growth.

The Maribyrnong River, while marking the eastern boundary of the City of Maribyrnong, was also an important catalyst for the establishment of industry in the region, as it enabled easy transport of raw materials and finished products to and from industries located along its banks. Boats and lighters which worked along the river had to be fairly small, however, as there was a bar at the junction of the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers, which was originally located at about where Lyons Street Footscray reached Maribyrnong Street. The junction was moved with the creation of the Coode Canal and Coode Island in the 1880s. By this time the Melbourne Harbor Trust had begun providing wharfs below Hopkins Street on the river and by 1920 the wharves extended down from the Hopkins Street Bridge to Lyons Street . At Yarraville wharves were built to service the industrial complexes that began to locate there in the 1870s and 1880s { Barnard, 2000}.

Along with cargo handling, boat repairs and building were carried out at Footscray from quite early times. Charlie Lovett recalled that two floating docks were located on the Melbourne side of the river near Footscray in the 1860s and they attracted most of the shipping coming up to Melbourne that needed to be repaired . In the 1880s two shipbuilding yards were operating on the Maribyrnong at Footscray, one of them on the Melbourne side, Campbell, Sloss and Mc Cann, employing 300 men. Foreman and Co, operated on the Footscray side { Barnard, 2000}

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During World War Two the Footscray Wharves were used by the Commonwealth Allied Works Council for assembling and fitting out small craft { Barnard, 2000} .

Government township lots in the area were first surveyed in 1849, lots being sold two years later and subsequently during the 19th. century. Footscray was officially proclaimed a town in the government gazette of 1887 although functioning as such for many years before gazettal. Early parish plans show a punt operating across the Saltwater River at the bottom of Bunbury Street. From this point two dray tracks extended west to Bendigo and south to Geelong and Williamstown but, first of all, taking a north-south path which approximated the line of Whitehall and Moreland Streets. As a consequence of these tracks and the wharf established on the bank of the Maribyrnong River, buildings shown on these early plans were largely confined to these streets as the town's major traffic routes.

However the Borough plan of 1877 shows the effect of another factor influencing the distribution of buildings. The railway station had opened in 1859, facing onto Napier Street (now gone) and created a new road traffic destination. Because of this, the town's east-west streets (as shown in 1877) possess development, in addition to that on the older routes such as Whitehall and Moreland. A further plan of 1910 shows the next stage in development. In 1908, the `down side' railway station had shifted from Napier Street, up Hyde Street, to the end of Bunbury Street. As a consequence, the new Edwardian period housing extended along Hyde, Talbot and the east end of Bunbury Street, and is evident today. Equally so are the old commercial sites which served the dray tracks, surviving today in a group south of Bunbury Street in Whitehall Street. This group includes the individually notable Junction Hotel. Another influence, specific to Talbot Street, was the revocation of the Anglican reserve and re-establishment of the church in Paisley Street. This provided the vehicle for the current homogeneous architectural character in that street.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme	Making suburbs

PAHT Subtheme	Making suburbs	**Local Theme(s)**	River Crossings: Fords, Punts, Hotels and Bridges

Cultural Significance

The Old Footscray Township Residential Precinct is significant to the City because:

- of the distinct building groups and other early fabric in the precinct express the development influences at play in Footscray from the beginning of permanent settlement in the region and the City, in particular the first river crossing and the two railway station locations, plus the resulting development surges (Criteria A4, A3) ;

- the street pattern reflects the 1849 township plan and hence the early survey period (Criterion A4);
- it contains individually significant places such as early commercial structures such as one of the city's oldest hotels which catered for overland and river traffic before the dominance of other transport forms (Criterion A4); and
- the precinct contains the best examples of the rare mature street trees in the City (Bunbury St) which support the period expression of the built environment (Criterion B2).

Comparative Examples:

The early but private Yarraville survey has similar qualities but was initially located on a railway corridor, not a river. Similarly the old village of Braybrook was located on an overland route. Maribyrnong village is also located on a river but did not have the early port function.

Recommendations

Heritage Victoria Register	No
Register of the National Estate:	No
National Trust Register:	No
Other Heritage Listings	No
Planning Scheme Protection	Recommended
External Paint Controls Apply?:	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls Apply?:	No
Tree Controls Apply?:	No
Included on the Victorian Heritage Register under the Act:	No
Are there Outbuildings or Fences not Exempt?:	No
Prohibited Uses may be Permitted	No

Recommendations:

The boundaries of the existing Heritage Overlay HA8 in the City of Maribyrnong Planning Scheme should be adjusted to the revised boundaries to make up one precinct (refer map), adding the north side of Talbot Street, parts of Cowper (64-80) and Whitehall Streets (62-66). The Bunbury Street tree avenue is to be included in a separate overlay guided by the recommended extent in Volume 6.

A Design & Development Overlay should be considered for the whole of the 1849 town survey to protect the surviving parts of the subdivision and enhance its public perception plus associated archaeological sites along the river. This plan was bordered by Wingfield on the north, part Moreland and Cowper Streets on the west, Napier St on the south, and part of Moreland and Maribyrnong Streets on the east { Lack, 1991: 40 plan}. Blocks 2, and 4-7 had four corner lots and six intermediate lots. Block One had two corner lots and three

intermediate lots; Block Three had two corner lots and two intermediate lots. There were no rear right of ways.

The following objectives have been drawn from the Statement of Significance where contributory places or elements are generally those which derive from the Edwardian & Victorian-eras including:

- small Victorian & Edwardian single-storey attached and detached housing with brick and weatherboard wall cladding, corrugated iron and slate roofing, front verandahs, similar front and side setbacks and narrow block frontages;
- early use of timber picket front fences;
- early use of asphalt footpaths and stone kerb and channel, with some surviving;
- use of basalt pitcher lined medians for street tree planting;
- originally with no provision for on-site vehicle parking for most of the identified housing;
- major built form of the typical Victorian hipped roof and Edwardian hipped main roof and projecting gable roof form combination.

It is recommended:

- to conserve and enhance the contributory elements in the precinct and individually significant places outside of that era, as an evocation of the two major early growth periods within the old Footscray township grid, where elements include buildings, objects, landscape, land and street works and enhancement includes the reinstatement of missing original elements;
- to conserve and enhance the visual relationship between contributory elements in the precinct;
- to conserve and enhance the public view of these contributory elements;
- to conserve and enhance the mature street trees in Bunbury St;
- to conserve and enhance the basalt pitcher lined medians for street tree planting
- to conserve and enhance key adjoining places such as the Footscray Railway Station and the associated reserve (both on the Victorian Heritage Register) ;
- to conserve and enhance the amenity of the precinct to aid in its heritage conservation;
- to ensure that new elements within the precinct are recessive and related to the precinct's contributory elements in roof and plan form, external materials, front and side setbacks from property boundaries, and building bulk as viewed from public areas; and
- that Council investigate the preparation of an incorporated plan for the precinct which will embody the above objectives.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

A3 Importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of flora, fauna, landscape or cultural features.

distinct building groups and types and other early fabric in the precinct express the various development influences at play in Footscray from the beginning of permanent settlement in the region and the City, in particular the first river crossing and the

two railway station locations, the resulting development surges and industrial expansion period;
the street pattern reflects the early survey process,

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.

former wharf sites and associated commercial structures which help express Footscray's former premier role in metropolitan stone extraction;

individually significant places such as the adjoining railway station precinct and early commercial structures such as one of the city's oldest hotels which reflect in their type and palcement the influence of transport forms;

of the distinct building groups and other early fabric in the precinct express the development influences at play in Footscray from the beginning of permanent settlement in the region and the City, in particular the first river crossing and the two railway station locations, the resulting development surges and industrial expansion periods;

the street pattern reflects the 1849 township plan and hence the early survey period

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.

has the best examples of the rare mature street trees in the City which also support the period expression of the built environment

☑ **historical significanc** ☑ **architectural significan** ☐ **social significance** ☐ **scientific significanc**
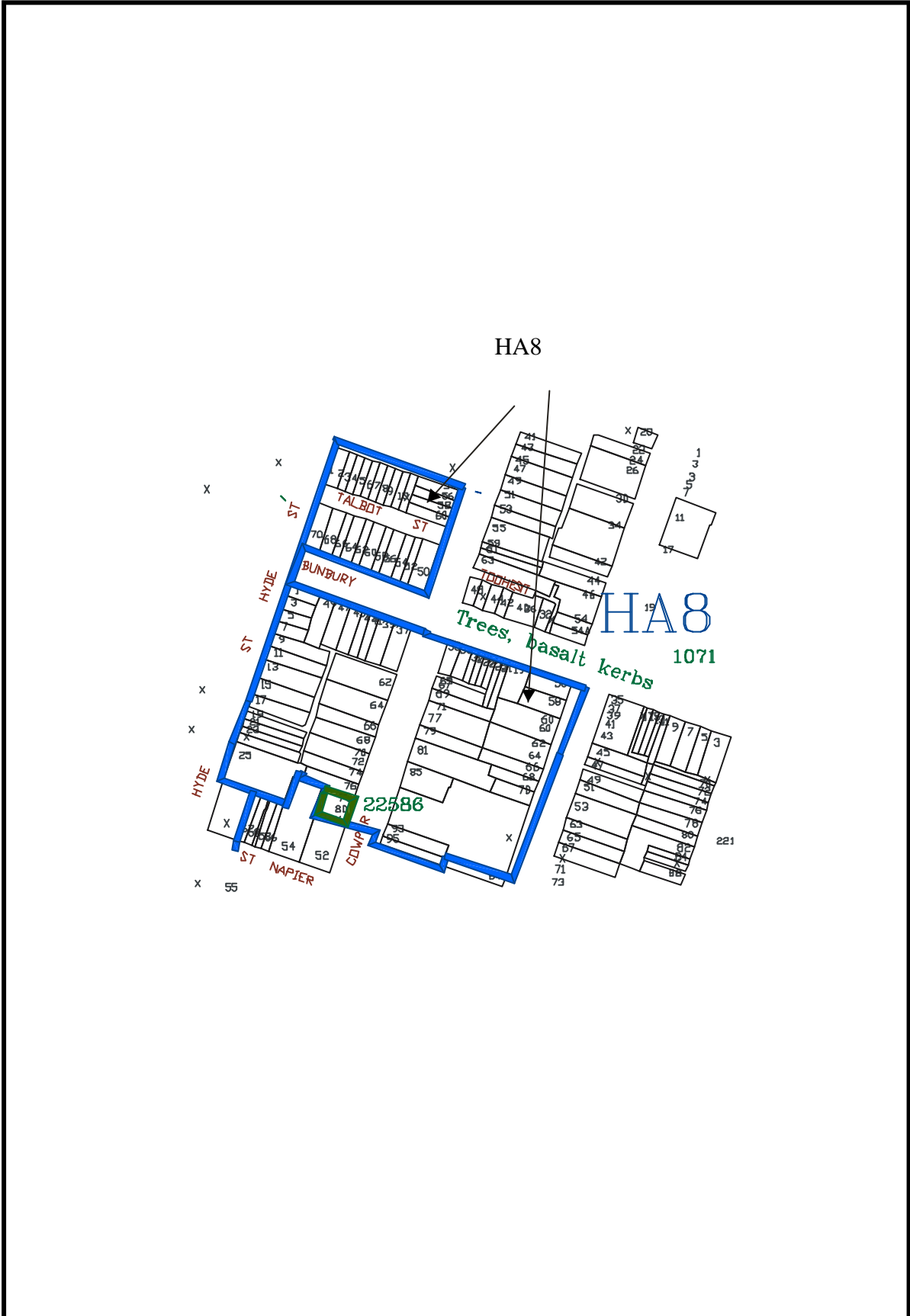
Documentation

References

Barnard , 2000, Historic Places Review Vol 2 Environmental History, City of Maribyrnong
Butler , 1989, City of Footscray Urban Conservation Study, Vol. 3:20
Butler, G. 1993 The Footscray Urban Conservation Area Review, City of Footscray

Data recording

Assessed By: Graeme Butler, Francine Gilfedder

Assessed Date: June 2000

HA8
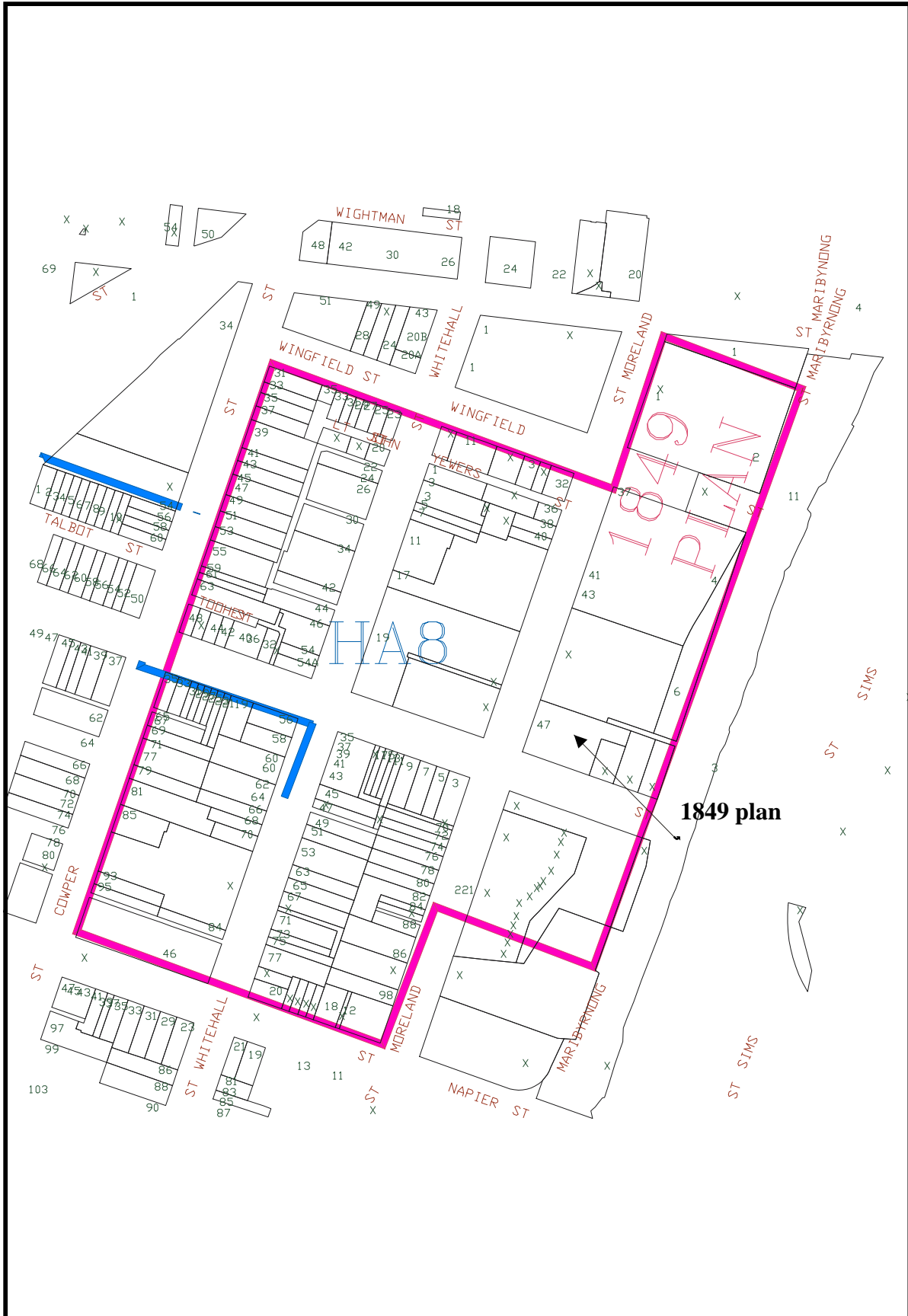

HA8: Old Footscray Township residential

HA8: 1849 Footscray Township plan