

## Identification and location

**Name of place:** **Somerville Road 20th Century Residential Precinct**

**Other Name**

**Address**

31-41

Somerville Road

Yarraville

**Place Identifier**

22576

**Heritage Overlay Number 2000**

HA15

**Heritage Significance**

City

**Creation date(s)**

1860s-1930s

**Map (Melway)**

42B8

**Boundary description**

Part of Somerville Road, with emphasis on all original inter-war and Edwardian-era elements, including basalt pitched paving, asphalt footpaths, lot sizes and street patterns, and the individually significant Victorian-era place, 31-33 Somerville Rd.

**Local Government Area**

City of Maribyrnong

**Ownership Type**

Private & Public

## Description

**Site Type:**

Housing estate

### Physical Description

The general character of the Somerville Road 20th Century Residential Precinct comprises many elements such as masonry construction, tiled roofing, hipped and gabled roof forms, low masonry front fences, detached siting and deep set backs in landscaped blocks, and typical inter-war planting such as clipped evergreen shrubs and conifers. Housing styles range from Tudor revival (35) to Mediterranean villas (35A). There are single 3m maximum width crossovers to garaging set at the back of the block and accessed by side drives. There are concrete footpaths, kerb and channel, with varying lot frontages and identical lot depths.

Set on the south side of Somerville Road, east of the railway, this is a group of detached, masonry (brick and stucco), largely single storey, inter-war period housing with an associated early 20th century Church of England and residence (St Lukes). It is isolated from the Yarraville area by the subdivision and faces the Seddon heritage residential precinct. The precinct is unrelated to the general character of the Seddon area which is Edwardian-era or the Yarraville area which is both Victorian & Edwardian. The masonry construction, simple stylistic treatment, hipped roof form, low masonry front fences and associated inter-war planting provide a distinctive character among the surrounding, generally earlier, development. Adjoining is the individually significant and early 31-33 Somerville Road which is set well back in a mature

landscape ( a row of seven mature elms).

Although not related in style or period, the former Stephen Stephens house and mature elms at 31-33 Somerville Rd is historically, physically and visually connected with the group. This is made more so by the vacant land and unrelated development to the east of the house and the group. The house is obscured from view but is of an early date and once fronted Stephen Street: it is a hipped roof stone house with a detached kitchen. The latter still possesses exposed stonework but the former has been stuccoed over.

### **Condition**

good (partially disturbed, well preserved)

### **Integrity**

substantially intact/some intrusions

### **Context**

Clearly shaped by the major transport routes and centres which helped demarcate residential enclaves at differing times of the City's history.

### **Threats:**

Unrelated development, changes to original fabric

### **History**

The Somerville Road 20th Century Residential Precinct is set between the 1920s St Luke's Church of England and its residence (1922) and Airlie, the former Stephen Stephens house at 31-33 Somerville Road. The precinct land was once part of Airlie's grounds. The church residence foundation stone was laid on 2.9.22 by the Most Rev Harrington Clair Lees, Archbishop. The builder was A Clissold and the designers Thos. Watts & Sons. The houses between were owned in part by the MacFarlane family (number 35 & 35A) in the inter-war period {Sands & McDougall Directory, 1935}.

The history of Airlie or the Stephen Stephens house is closely connected with the origins of this precinct. It began when A. Rodgers (or Rogers), an engine fitter at Sandridge, sold this land in 1859 to Footscray councillor, factory-owner and solicitor, Stephen Stephens. It is likely that Stephens had the house built in 1859, given the series of mortgages which occurred in that year { VRGO; Sands & McDougall Directory, 1863-68 }. His business address was in Queen Street {Sands & McDougall Directory, 1866}.

The Ogilvy tenure followed (care of A. J. Ogilvy & Co. accountants and estate agents) when the property was described in 1871 as a stone and wood house with land in Somerville Road {Rate Book, 1871, 885 }. Meanwhile MacMeikan had purchased the 3 acre property for £1400. MacMeikan then relocated his business, the Animal Guano and Converting Works, to

Yarraville from Flemington with partner James Reid {Cuming: 14; Rate Book, 1871, 832}. By the late 1870s, trustees controlled MacMeikan's estate and leased Airlie to its long-term occupant, the customs officer, Horace Walpole. Around the same time, part of the guano works was sold to the adjoining Cuming Smith & Co. for use in conjunction with their fertilizer works { `Footscray's First Fifty Years', 1909 : 48}. By 1881 Walpole owned what was described as a `stone house and land' on the south side of Somerville Road {RB1881, 2463-4}. The Chinese gardener Ah Hoy leased Airlie's grounds (the site of these houses) in 1882-3 as a market garden. The MMBW Detail Plan of the area, 1895, shows the Walpole house on its large block, adjoining the Chinese market garden where today's inter-war housing group stands.

### Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme Making suburbs

PAHT Subtheme Making suburbs

Local Theme(s) Twentieth Century Residential Development

### Cultural Significance

Somerville Road 20th Century Residential Precinct is significant to the City of Maribyrnong because:

- it is one of the best preserved of the City's middle class inter-war residential enclaves and thus highly expressive of this era in the City's development as expressed by:
  - decorative masonry and stucco walling,
  - tiled roofing, hipped and gabled roof forms,
  - low masonry front fences,
  - detached siting set back in landscaped blocks,
  - typical inter-war planting such as clipped evergreen shrubs and conifers,
  - styles ranging from Tudor revival to Mediterranean villa,
  - single 3m maximum width crossovers to garaging set at the back of the block accessed by side drives,
  - concrete footpaths, kerb and channel, and
  - varying lot frontages, identical lot depths (Criterion A4);
- it contains individually historically significant places such as the Church of England and the former Stephen Stephens residence, the grounds of which once held the precinct (Criterion A4).

### Comparative Examples:

Inter-war housing groups elsewhere in the city are weatherboard and typically of mass housing styles. This group is masonry and has some individual architectural styling as well as the historically notable church and former Captain Shakespeare residence.

## 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 boundaries of the existing Heritage Overlay HA15 in the City of Maribyrnong Planning Scheme should be adjusted to the revised boundaries (refer map).

The following objectives have been drawn from the Statement of Significance where identified contributory places or elements are generally those which derive from the inter-war era (c1919-38). These include masonry construction, tiled roofing, hipped and gabled roof forms, low masonry front fences, detached siting set back in landscaped blocks, typical inter-war planting such as clipped evergreen shrubs and conifers. Housing styles range from Tudor revival to Mediterranean villa and there are single 3m maximum width crossovers to garaging set at the back of the block which is accessed by side drives. There are concrete footpaths, kerb and channel and lot frontages vary although there are identical lot depths.

It is recommended:

- to conserve and enhance the elements in the precinct which derive from the inter-war period, as one of the best preserved of the City's middle class inter-war residential enclaves, where elements include buildings, objects, landscape, land and street works, plus the individually significant Stephens house 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 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 proposed heritage overlay which will embody the above objectives.

## 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.*

it is one of the best preserved of the city's inter-war residential enclaves and thus highly expressive of this era in the City's development;  
it contains individually historically significant places such as the Church of England and the former Stephen Stephens residence, the grounds of which once held the precinct

*H1 Importance for their close associations with individuals whose activities have been significant within the history of the nation, state or region.*

Linked with locally notable Stephen Stephens whose residence grounds of which once held the precinct

historical significant  architectural significant  social significance  scientific significant

## Documentation

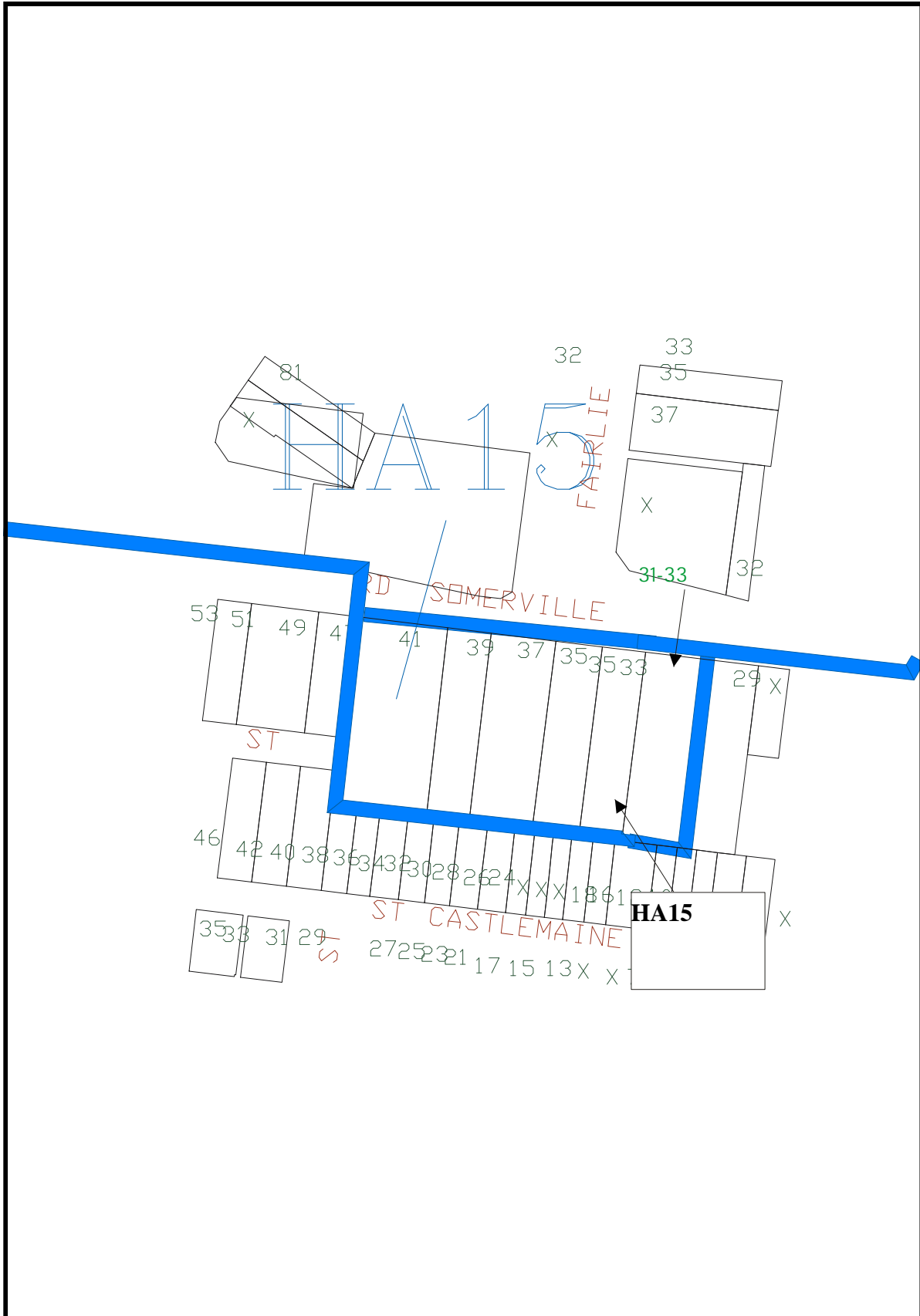
### References

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Butler, G. 1993 The Footscray Urban Conservation Area Review, City of Footscray:13  
Victorian Registrar General Office (RGO) search note;  
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Cuming, `James Cuming an Autobiography' :14  
Melbourne University Architects Index (MUAI)  
Hammerton, `Harmsworth's Universal Encyclopaedia': 7870  
Footscray Historical Society, 1969, Notes on Historical Buildings.

## Data recording

Assessed By:

Assessed Date:



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