

Identification and location

Name of place:

Other Name

Address

Place Identifier

Heritage Overlay Number 2000

Heritage Significance

Creation date(s)

Map (Melway)

Boundary description

Local Government Area

Ownership Type

Description

Site Type:

Physical Description

The general character of the Yarraville Residential Precinct is that of small Victorian & Edwardian single-storey detached housing with mainly weatherboard and some brick wall cladding, corrugated iron roofing, front verandahs, similar front and side setbacks and narrow block frontages. Houses were originally with timber picket front fences and streets with asphalt footpaths and stone kerb and channel, with some surviving. Originally there was no provision for on-site vehicle parking for most of the identified housing. The major built form is of the typical Victorian era hipped roof and Edwardian era main hip and projecting gable roof form combination although there are some early two storey masonry parapeted houses. The corner-sited commercial development, had zero lot lines. Properties are generally surviving in the grid lot layout from the 1859 township layout as shown in the 'Township of Yarraville' plan and there is mature elm street tree planting typical of the Victorian-era. Of the 507 places in the precinct as a whole 429 are contributory.

In the residential areas there are concentrations of 19th century housing which survives in Ovens Street (north side), Stephen (north end) and Castlemaine Street (west end). Edwardian groups

are in Sussex, Knox and part of Stephen (north) Streets. Later eras are represented in a lesser concentration in Frederick Street. Some areas, such as Stephen Street have elements of an early commercial- civic core (former Lyric Theatre) which has been superseded by the present centre grouped around the railway. Most houses are altered in detail but retain enough original fabric to express their development period better than most in the City. This is aided by rare (in the City of Maribyrnong) mature public landscape (elms, street trees) in Stephen St, south of Somerville Road. Very little of the bluestone kerb and channel which was once prevalent in the precinct has remained except for the east end of Blackwood and Lennox Streets and the large and notable expanse of basalt pitchers on the railway yard next to Woods St.

Part of the 1859 township plan lies outside of the proposed heritage overlay HA18 where the existing building stock has been judged to be below the study threshold for adequate expression of the historical themes (see Volume 2) and satisfaction of the Australian Heritage Commission criteria. However the township plan itself is of significance as evoked by the street and subdivision pattern and street names which survive from its creation date.

Condition

fair (disturbed, reasonably preserved)

Integrity

partially intact/intrusions

Context

Framed and fed from an early date by the railway and linked commercially to the riverside factory complexes, the precinct has developed as a self-contained urban centre.

Threats:

Unrelated development, changes to original fabric

History

It is apparent from an examination of the development of the Maribyrnong study area, that the transport routes that were opened up during the 1850s seem to have been an incentive for private developers to market estates or private villages.

Transport routes that were opened up during the 1850s seem to have been an incentive for private developers to market estates or private villages. The (soon to be built) Williamstown railway line was a selling point at Yarraville as was the Ballarat Road at Braybrook and Maidstone. Often developers carved land up into tiny allotments, very few of which were probably actually built upon during the 1850s or soon after. Some remnants of these old street configurations can still be made out at Braybrook and Maidstone, while the township of Yarraville still retains the streets that were laid out in the 1850s {Barnard, 2000}.

Allotments in the Township of Yarraville were first offered for sale at a grand fete, picnic and land sale in April 1859. The township was centred around the Williamstown railway line (mostly to the west of it), although Yarraville station was not opened until 1872. ... streets (were) named after Victorian goldfields, possibly to attract goldminers as buyers. The township was a rectangular grid of streets between Somerville Road and Newcastle Street and Fehon and Ballarat Streets and presumably some sales of allotments were made at the first sale for soon another advertising bill was showing a plan of 'remaining allotments for sale at the township of Yarraville'. By 1879 there were 200 houses at Yarraville. The opening of the railway station in 1872 and the siting of a number of industries further east along the river in the 1870s and 1880s probably helped to attract workers to the township and commercial development occurred in Anderson and Ballarat Streets in the 1880s {Barnard, 2000}.

The 'Township of Yarraville' was an 1855 private subdivision of the 78 acre CA 2/8, originally granted to architect James Gill. Auctioneer, C.J. Henningham, of Bourke Street west, was the selling agent and reputedly landed his customers by steamer at a quarryman's jetty on the Maribymong River and brought them overland to the site. His sale plan showed the river lapping at the eastern perimeter of his 'town' while the Stony Creek threatened to broach his property on the south: it was surrounded by flowing streams. However there was no deceit about the future position of the Williamstown railway (1859) but the station shown was not to materialise until c1872 and at a different location. A later seller of the estate, architect-surveyor, Henry Biers noted on his sale plan that a deputation had sought a station and that such a facility would bring owners within 10 minutes of the city.

The obelisk shown on the sale plan at the corner of Blackwood and Ballarat Streets (as well as the flagstaff at the Simpson Street corner), made Ballarat Street the principal street of the town. In fact such an obelisk apparently did exist, mounted on a granite base, and stood for a time in the Cuming Gardens. Anderson Street, as the only street shown with a level-crossing, was the principal east-west street, with no other streets able to cross the town, north-south or east-west.

The sale-bill also cited the town's attributes:

'the land is high and dry (despite the rivers), commanding the most picturesque views of Melbourne, Collingwood, Emerald Hill, Sandridge, Windsor, St. Kilda, Williamstown, the Bay and Shipping, as well as the country inland for many miles.

The ground is good garden soil, there is a never failing creek of fresh water... and the finest building stone...'

The plan was set out between Fehon and Stephen Streets, Somerville Road and Francis Street, with street names being the same both sides of the railway unlike today. Most lots measured

either 20 by 70 feet (north-south) or 20 by 80 feet (east-west), none had rear lanes for night soil collection. Street names were similar to today but Canterbury Street was called Yarra Street, George Street crossed between Murray and Canterbury near the railway, Newcastle was called Adelaide, Norfolk was called Essex. Street names, lot patterns and the lack of rear ROWs have been changed by later re-subdivision, presumably by speculators who bought a number of blocks and redivided them for a higher density and profit. Goulburn and Wilson Streets once joined Stephen Street but the latter has been absorbed into the rear of lots facing Blackwood Street and Maggie Street has disrupted Goulburn Street, Sussex, Murray and Norfolk Streets have changed course between Ballarat and Stephen Streets.

Some of the lots on the sale plan already had proud owners. Names like Duncan, Moyes, Williams, Grey, McHardy and Nesbitt were shown on some of the plans, along with some buildings which mostly straddled double blocks owned by Steele, Dixon, Hampson and Tapscott. Like many of the subdivisions created immediately after the gold rush, it presumably aimed to house the returning diggers and towards this end the use of gold field towns as street names was an inspired idea.

A gazetteer entry for Yarraville in 1879 noted that the riverside industries had established themselves and their workers set up homes, coinciding with the arrival of the railway station. The population was around 600 and the house-count 200. Earlier in the 1870s, twelve of the sixteen tradesmen cited for Yarraville in Melbourne directories were still directly linked with the stone industry, with later directories revealing the diversification of industry in the area. The 1877 borough plan showed residential subdivisions of the former Crown Portions 3 and 1 which adjoined the 'town' and it was CP 1 which possessed the most buildings with a concentration in Stephen Street. Yarraville 'town' appeared to be all but deserted.

The 1894 MMBW plan showed the obverse situation, with extensive commercial development in Anderson Street and some in Ballarat Street. Elsewhere, generally residential development existed (i.e.. Albert, Castlemaine, Blanche, Ovens, Simpson, Ballarat south, Newcastle and Norfolk Streets) except for residual commercial centres around the Schild, Lennox and Simpson Streets' corners made with Stephen Street. W. P. Smith's former licensed grocery (1875), at 97 Stephen Street, is an example of the early commercial nodes in Stephen Street.

Between the dates depicted by these two maps was the development of the railway station and yards to serve the new industries and a consequent shift of the commercial area towards it. The railway station was rebuilt in 1893 and developed in the Edwardian-era. Once relocated near the railway station, the commercial and civic centre developed to its present peak. This development is also reflected in the housing stock which also reflects these two eras, one phase closely connected with the other.

Thematic context

Australian Principal Theme	Making suburbs	
PAHT Subtheme	Making suburbs	Local Theme(s)
		Private subdivisions and villages in the nineteenth century

Cultural Significance

The Yarraville Residential Precinct is significant to the City of Maribyrnong because:

- it (with the Yarraville Commercial & Civic precinct) is expressive of two major development periods in the City's history (Victorian-era, Edwardian-era), with all of the elements which make up an urban area from these periods, such as the transport hub and associated entertainment, civic and commercial buildings close to the station, and the surrounding residential areas which still express the dominant Edwardian and Victorian-eras, as expressed by:

- small Victorian & Edwardian single-storey detached housing with mainly weatherboard and some brick wall cladding, corrugated iron roofing, front verandahs, similar front and side setbacks and narrow block frontages,
- some surviving early asphalt footpaths and stone kerb and channel,
- pre motor-car age indicated by no provision originally for on-site vehicle parking for most of the identified housing,
- major built form of the typical Victorian era hipped roof and Edwardian era main hip and projecting gable roof form combination,
- some early two storey masonry parapeted, zero lot line, corner-sited commercial development at prominent locations in the streetscape,
- mature elm street tree planting typical of the Victorian-era (Criteria A3, A4);
- of the early underlying street, subdivision pattern and street names (1859 plan of Yarraville Township) which derive from one of the early private town surveys in the Colony of Victoria and the oldest known private township plan to be created and sold within the City (Criterion A4); and
- it contains elements of the earlier phase of Yarraville's commercial development which occupied prominent street corners (Criterion A4).

Comparative Examples:

As a township plan in the City it is rivalled in age by government surveys at Braybrook and Maidstone but remains the oldest known private township survey to survive in the City. The built character of this area is paralleled by the Old Footscray Township Precinct and parts of Upper Footscray and Footscray residential precincts; each with particular historical characteristics and a common focus on grouping around transport nodes. However each was regarded as a separate historical entity when they developed and as such although visually similar

they each have a historical origin which is distinct.

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 HA16 in the City of Maribyrnong Planning Scheme should be adjusted to the revised boundaries (refer map) which exclude the commercial and civic centre.

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 detached housing with mainly weatherboard and some brick wall cladding, corrugated iron roofing, front verandahs, similar front and side setbacks and narrow block frontages;
- originally with timber picket front fences;
- originally with asphalt footpaths and stone kerb and channel, with some surviving;
- originally with no provision for on-site vehicle parking for most of the identified housing;
- major built form of the typical Victorian era hipped roof and Edwardian era main hip and projecting gable roof form combination.
- some early two storey masonry parapeted, zero lot line, corner-sited commercial development,
- an early underlying street, subdivision pattern and street names which derive from one of the early private town surveys in the Colony of Victoria (1859 'Township of Yarraville' plan);
- mature elm street tree planting typical of the Victorian-era.

It is recommended:

- to conserve and enhance the identified contributory elements in the precinct and individually significant places, as expressive of two major development periods in the City's history, where elements include buildings, objects, landscape, land and street works and enhancement includes the reinstatement of missing original elements;
- to conserve and enhance the surviving 1859 township layout as shown in the 'Township of Yarraville' plan;
- 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 prominence of key heritage places such as the former Lyric Theatre;
- 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;
- that Council investigate the preparation of a separate heritage overlay, with an incorporated plan which defines management objectives and permit exemptions for that part of the old Yarraville Township survey which is outside of the proposed heritage overlay HA18, to protect the surviving parts of the plan (street names and alignments, surviving subdivision) and enhance its public perception; and
- that Council investigate the preparation of an incorporated plan for the proposed heritage overlay which (HA18) will embody the above principles.

Australian Heritage Commission Criteria

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

all of the elements which make up an urban area from these periods, such as the transport hub and associated entertainment, civic and commercial buildings close to the station, and the surrounding residential areas which still express the dominant Edwardian and Victorian-eras

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.

(with the Yarraville Commercial & Civic precinct) is expressive of two major development periods in the City's history (Victorian-era, Edwardian-era)
it is based on the 1859 plan of Yarraville Township which is the oldest known private township plan to be created and sold within the City; and
it contains elements of the earlier phase of Yarraville's commercial development which occupied prominent street corners

historical significant architectural significant social significance scientific significant

Documentation

References

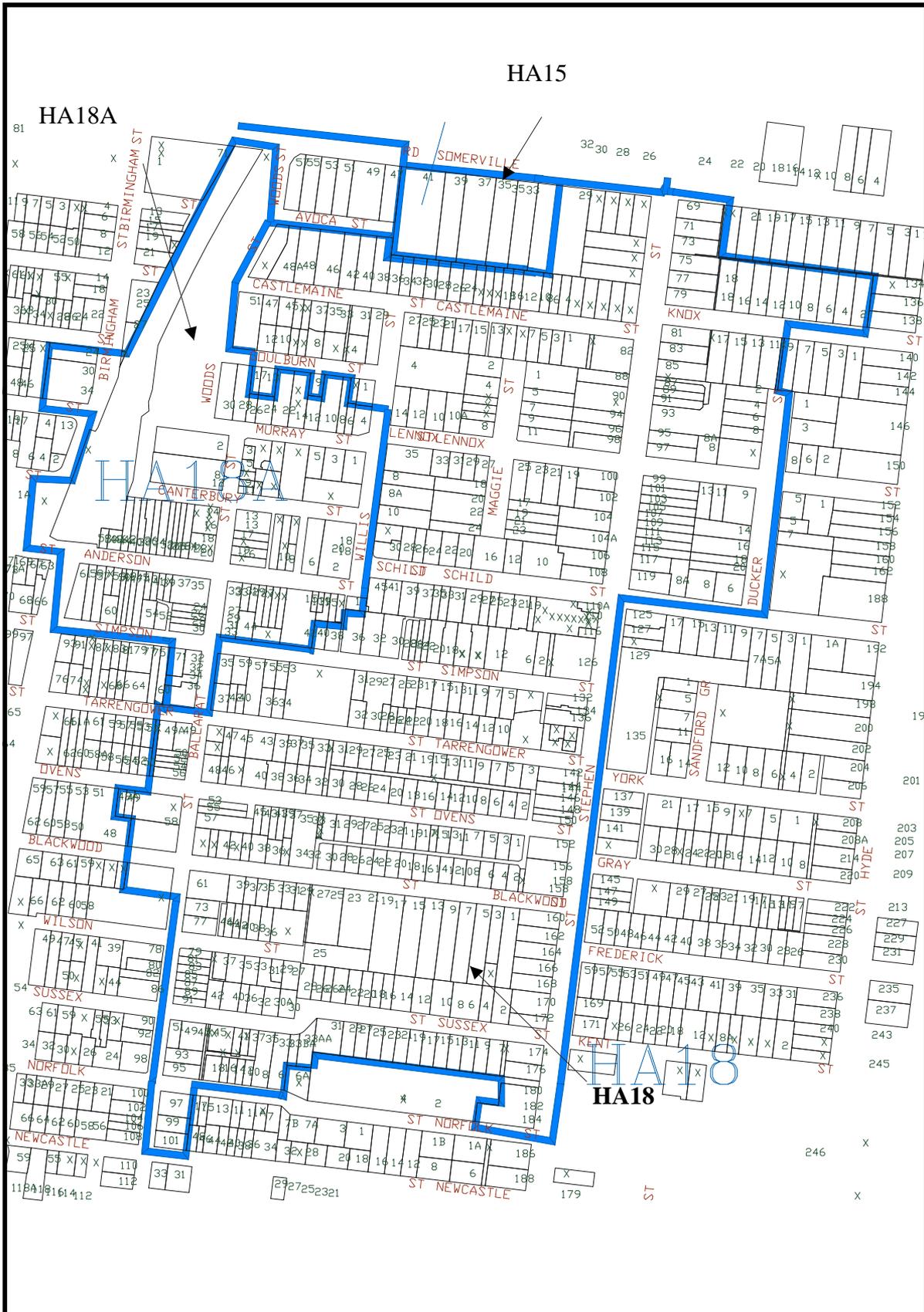
Barnard, 2000, Historic Places Review Vol 2 Environmental History, City of Maribyrnong
Butler, 1989, City of Footscray Urban Conservation Study, Vol. 3: 26 cites VRGO 'Yarraville Township' plan in draw,
Footscray's First One Hundred Years (FFOY), 1909: 16, 20, 72 'Footscray Advertiser' 2/7/1959
Lack, 1991, A History of Footscray

Data recording

Assessed By:

Assessed Date:

Historic Places - Urban Conservation Areas & Individual Places in the former City of Footscray



HA18: Yarraville Residential Precinct