
Bowen Street Urban Conservation Area [Area 12.2]

Extent

The Bowen Street Urban Conservation Area comprises most of the north and south sides of Bowen Street.

History

Although this area showed little development in the 1850s,¹⁸⁵ by the 1890s, a number of streets in the northern section of a precinct bounded by High Street, Orrong Road, Williams Road and Dandenong Road, had been intensely developed. Bowen Street with its small weatherboard houses on narrow allotments was an example of this development as were George Street, Highbury Grove and Chomley Streets. The remainder of the precinct comprised large mansion houses on extensive allotments.¹⁸⁶

Today, Bowen Street remains as a characteristic nineteenth century working-class street close to High Street and Williams Road, still with small weatherboard cottages with small frontage set-backs. Such cottages were once, last century, typical housing in the Prahran area with its many service industries established to meet the needs of more affluent families in the northern areas of South Yarra and Toorak. The relationship between the workers' housing and the mansions is of interest.

Description

The Bowen Street Urban Conservation Area comprises a remarkable group of timber cottages each originally virtually identical in its detailing, but with several original variations apparent. Each cottage is single fronted and built in timber. The main facade uses timber block work while the sides are clad in weatherboards. A convex verandah extends across the main facade and is supported on chamfered posts with cast iron lace of varied patterns. Paired pendant eaves brackets with mouldings between are set under the eaves on the front facade. On the south side the cottages have a single front window with side lights. The cottages on the north side vary this pattern with a paired double hung sash window on the main facade. Each has a heavily moulded chimney.

The streetscape is created by the repetition of the cottage forms and their virtually identical detailing. The street itself retains an asphalt surface but the footpaths and kerb and guttering have been replaced with concrete. Trees are planted within the footpath and include typical post-war species of Brush Box, Prunus and Melaleuca. The majority of the houses have recent timber picket fences in a variety of heights and forms.

Heritage characteristics

The key heritage characteristics of the Bowen Street Urban Conservation Area are:

- the form and stylistic consistency of the buildings

185. James Kearney. *Map of Melbourne and Its Suburbs*, 1855.

186. MMBW 1895 drainage plan.

- its historical relationship as a working class area to the adjoining mansion areas in the 1890s
- the use of simple timber picket fences, while not original, reflect the earlier fencing types expected to have been used in this area.

Analysis

This Area has a distinctive character created by the repetition of timber cottage forms and should remain as defined in the *Prahran Character and Conservation Study*.

Significance

Bowen Street Urban Conservation Area has significance as a cohesive and characteristic nineteenth century working-class street retaining a series of small weatherboard cottages with small frontage set-backs. The form and stylistic consistency of the cottages create a remarkably cohesive architectural character to the area. Historically the physical relationship between the workers' housing and the mansions is of interest.

Sources

Kearney, James, *Map of Melbourne and its Suburbs*, 1855.

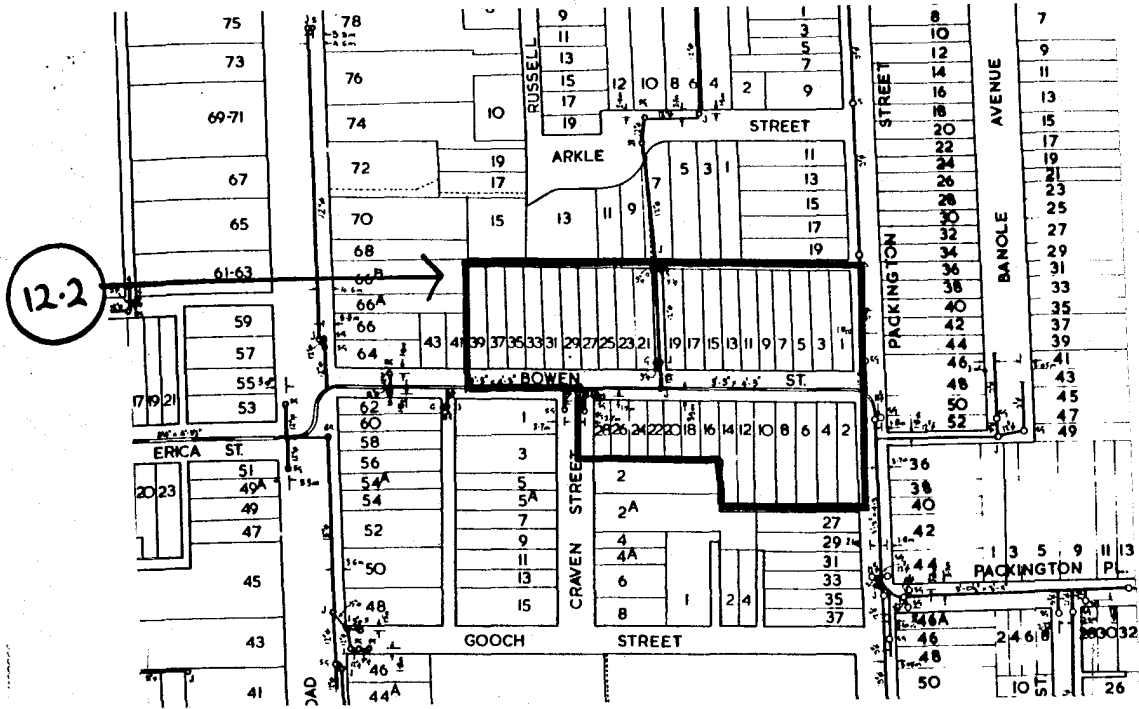
MMBW 1895 drainage plan.

Recommendations




1. Adopt the UC1 Area as exhibited.

Map

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Legend

-  Recommended UC1 Area
-  Remove from UC1 Area proposed in Amendment L24
-  Possible future extension

NOTE: Where UC1 Area proposed in Am. L24 coincides with the Recommended UC1 Area, only the latter is shown.