
Tivoli Urban Conservation Area [Area 5.3]

Extent

The Tivoli Urban Conservation Area is centred on Tivoli Road and extends north to the southern property boundary on the north side of Victoria Terrace. It includes both sides of Tivoli Road between Malcolm Street and Victoria Terrace and the east side only south of Malcolm Street.

History

Tivoli, the home of William Montgomerie Bell from the 1850s,⁷⁴ was built on one of the large properties stretching back from the Yarra River to Toorak Road purchased in the early 1840s land sale.⁷⁵ Tivoli, like the other three gentlemen's homes built in the area, Little Rockley, Bona Vista and Como, is shown on the 1855 Kearney map in an extensive garden setting.⁷⁶

The Bona Vista and Tivoli Estates were the first of these early properties to be subdivided. The old Tivoli homestead was retained north of Victoria Terrace. An auction plan dated 1888 showed the subdivision of the northern half of the Tivoli Estate below Victoria Terrace with the creation of Tivoli Road and River Street to the west. Twenty eight allotments were created. The remaining sixteen 'splendid allotments' on elevated sites between Victoria Terrace and Malcolm Street were advertised as 'the Cream of South Yarra, being situated on the Crown of the Hill'.⁷⁷ South of Malcolm Street at this time, there were five residences on large blocks facing Toorak Road. The only River Street allotments offered for sale were on its east side; by 1895 River Street's eastern side was lined with small timber or brick cottages on narrow lots.⁷⁸ The proximity of South Yarra Railway Station was used as a selling point.

A later auction plan showed the sale of 51 less desirable building allotments south of Malcolm Street on low-lying land close to the Australian Fire Brick Company site on the west side of River Street. This land was subject to much closer subdivision resulting in smaller blocks.⁷⁹

An 1895 MMBW drainage plan shows that most of the allotments in Tivoli Road and River Street had been already sold. Villa residences on the larger blocks in Tivoli Road north of Malcolm Street contrast with the small timber cottages on small blocks on the east side of River Street. The brickworks are indicated below the railway line on the west side of this street. It is thought that some of these cottages in River Street or the lower sections of Tivoli Street may have been occupied by brick workers. A directory search failed to confirm this but a search of Prahran rate

74. Betty Malone, *From Como House to Como City*, pp. 2, 3.

75. George Tibbits, 'History of Prahran', pp. 25, 26.

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

77. Tivoli Estate. The Pick of South Yarra. Tivoli and River Streets. Haughton Plan, Vol. II, p. 4. 1888.

78. MMBW drainage plan 1895.

79. South Yarra. 51 Splendid Building Allotments comprising the unsold portions of the Palermo and Tivoli Estate. Haughton Plan Vol. II.

records might provide an answer. The old Tivoli mansion still stands on a large site north of Victoria Terrace.

There was further subdivision of the Tivoli area in the 1920s. Copelan Street was created and the Methodist Babies home built on a large block at the end of the new street. When Alexandra Avenue was extended from Chapel Street eastward in the 1930s, using unemployed labour, there was further subdivision near the river.⁸⁰ The Australian Gas Retort and Firebrick Company on the block on the east side of River Street lasted until the 1970s.⁸¹

However, something of the early history of the area remains in a number of surviving double-storeyed Victorian villas on elevated sites in Tivoli Road north of Malcolm Street and a group of modest single storey timber cottages on the low-lying southerly sections of Tivoli Road and River Street. The block on the west side of River Street, once occupied by the brickworks, has been redeveloped.

Description

The Tivoli Urban Conservation Area is a Victorian residential locality, relatively densely settled, and resulting from the subdivision of the Tivoli Estate.

The buildings along Tivoli Road are quite diverse in form and architectural character, ranging from smaller timber Victorian houses on the lower part of the hill up to two storey detached 'terrace' houses towards the crest, presumably the latter exploiting views to the north and across the Yarra to Melbourne.

The character of the streetscape is predominantly Victorian due to the nature of the buildings along the street. There are, however, a number of later buildings, predominantly from the 1930s and 40s, and these include the block of flats which close the vista at the northern end of Tivoli Road. These flats are not within the Urban Conservation Area. Most of the buildings are located close to the street and therefore contribute substantially to the character of the streetscape. Many buildings have been altered to some extent. While a number of higher front fences have been built in the street, many houses still retain lower timber picket or iron palisade fences, revealing some of the garden as well as the majority of the house facade.

The overall form of the street and the Plane tree street plantings enhance the residential character. Bluestone kerb and gutters have been retained but reset at some stage with wide mortar joints. The Plane trees are largest at the southern end with their branches enclosing the roadway. At the northern end the trees are smaller, probably later plantings.

Heritage characteristics

The predominant heritage characteristics of the Tivoli Urban Conservation Area are:

- the predominantly Victorian residential character
- the diversity of building forms, ranging from smaller workers' housing to larger terrace-form housing on the hilltop

80. Sally Wilde, *The History of Prahran. 1925-1990*, pp. 24-30.

81. Betty Malone, *From Como House to Como City*, pp. 4, 6-7.

- the relationship between the form and scale of housing and the hillslope, demonstrating the association with social class
- the retention of traditional kerb and guttering materials which were typical of streets constructed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries..

Analysis

The boundary of the area is difficult to understand. Review of the 1895 MMBW Plan reveals that the section of Tivoli Road on the west side south of Malcolm Street contained smaller timber Victorian houses many of which remain today. The boundary appears to have been chosen to exclude timber houses rather than to reflect stylistic consistency, intactness or lack of intrusive new development.

While the houses may be simply typical of their period there is the possibility that they are associated with workers at the South Yarra Fire Brick Company (of which there is no other evidence remaining due to the redevelopment of the site for the 'Como' development). River Street only retains one house south of Malcolm Street.

The MMBW Plan has been annotated to show the extent of the houses to the south of Malcolm Street. These are predominantly timber Victorian houses. At least one has a sign indicating that it has been sold for redevelopment and there are several intrusive blocks of flats along this section. However, this is true too of the section within the Urban Conservation Area. On the eastern side of the street the two southern properties appear to be no. 34 and no. 36 which do not contribute to the area.

On the western side the houses that should be considered for inclusion go to no. 15 (although there is another possibly earlier property several houses to the south).

Two Prahran Character Areas are shown in the study. One includes the Methodist Baby Home and land to the north of Victoria Terrace as far as Alexandra Avenue and includes the house on the corner of Malcolm and River Streets. A second Prahran Character Area covers the southern part of Tivoli Street and includes the small inter-war shopping centre on the north side of Toorak Road and the corner of Tivoli Street. A review of the Tivoli Street area should involve the review of these two Prahran Character Areas.

Significance

The Tivoli Urban Conservation Area has significance as a residential area resulting from the subdivision of the Tivoli Estate that illustrates the historical development pattern of this locality close to the Yarra. Architecturally the Tivoli Urban Conservation Area reflects classed-based distinctions in housing size and location in relation to the landform, and illustrates a diversity of Victorian housing forms.

Sources

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

Malone, Betty, *'From Como House to Como City'*, 1989, pp. 2-4, 6-7.

MMBW 1895 drainage plan.

South Yarra. 51 Splendid Building Allotments comprising the unsold portions of the Palermo and Tivoli Estate. Haughton Plan Vol. II.

Tibbits, George, *Htory of Prahran*', pp. 25, 26.

Tivoli Estate. The Pick of South Yarra. Tivoli and River Streets. Haughton Plan, Vol. II, p.4. 1888.

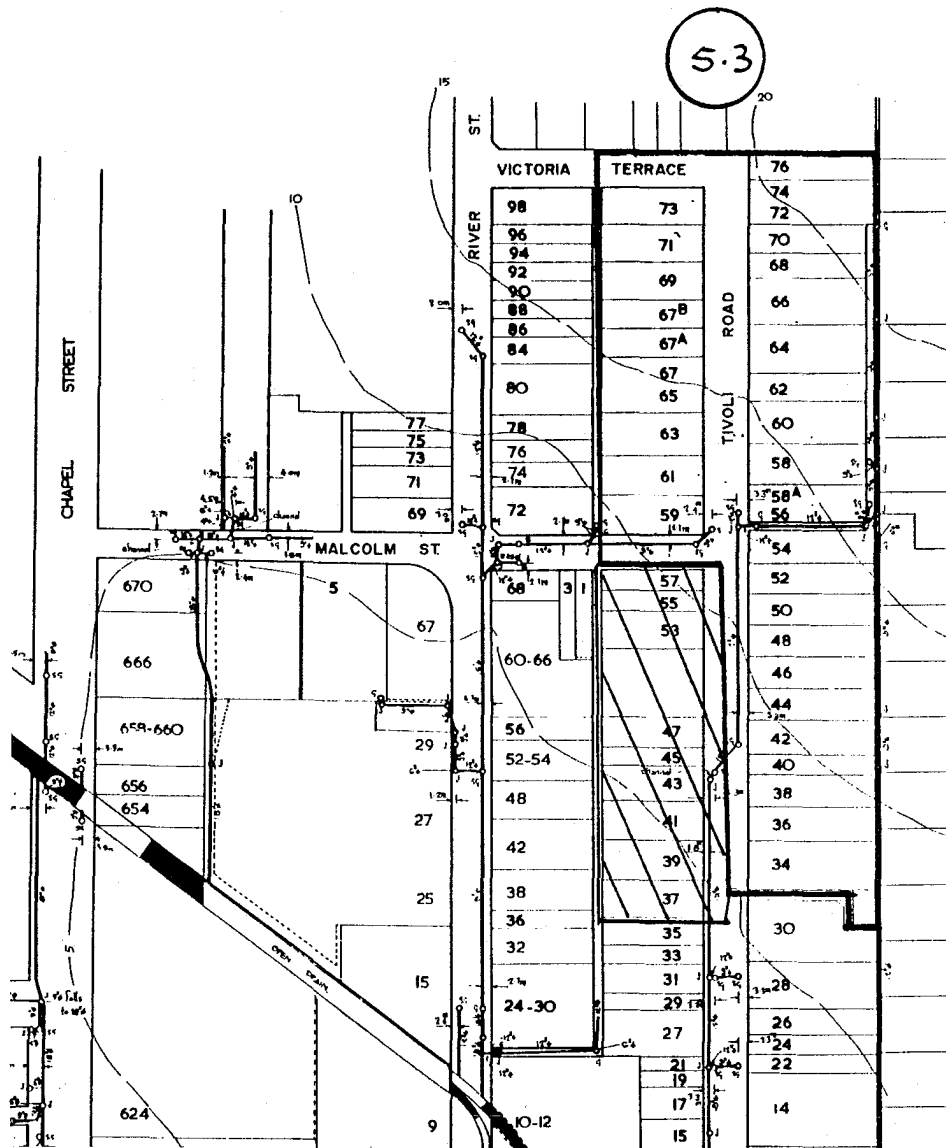
Wilde, Sally, *The History of Prahran. 1925-1990*, pp. 24-30.

Recommendations




1. Adopt the UC1 Area as exhibited.
2. Seek a future extension to the UC1 Area, taking into consideration:
 - . the timber housing on the west side of Tivoli Road south of Malcolm Street which, historically and visually, forms an important part of this locality.
 - . the inter-war shopping area at the corner of Tivoli and Toorak Roads.
 - . the house on the corner of Malcolm and River Streets, and any further housing that may remain to the north in River Street.
 - . the Methodist Babies Home site.

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.