
Tintern Avenue, Woodside Crescent, Williams Road Urban Conservation Area [Area 10.2]

Extent

The Tintern Avenue, Woodside Crescent, Williams Road Urban Conservation Area includes most of Tintern Avenue, a small section of the east side of Williams Road at the entry to Woodside Crescent and the north side of Woodside Crescent.

History

Tintern and Woodside were two of the properties on large allotments south of Toorak Road and east of Williams Road in mid-nineteenth century Toorak. In 1855, Tintern was shown on an early map of the area on a large wooded block located on the corner of Williams and Gardiner's Creek (now Toorak) Roads.¹⁵³ This homestead, an architecturally-important portable iron structure, was built for William Westgarth, merchant and early colonist.¹⁵⁴ Woodside was a property to the south of Tintern, also on a large allotment in the 1850s.¹⁵⁵

Large sections of this area had been developed by the 1890s. However, Tintern still stood on its extensive allotment. Woodside, on a large but reduced allotment, was located at the eastern end of Woodside Crescent. There were villas on good-sized blocks on the north side of this crescent but the timber houses on the south side were on considerably smaller blocks.¹⁵⁶

Major changes occurred in the next decade when c1910 Walter Butler, architect and owner, created the U-shaped Tintern Avenue.¹⁵⁷ A contemporary auction plan showed Tintern Avenue with the old mansion retained on Lot 9 on the east side of the crescent. A Wesleyan Church (later known as the Toorak Methodist Church and in recent times severely damaged by fire) was located west of the avenue on the corner of Toorak and Williams Roads. Across Toorak Road and opposite the Tintern Estate was Taylor and Sangsters, one of the nurseries which designed the gardens and providing plants for the grand houses (such as Como) of Toorak. A walkway which remains today linked Tintern Avenue West to Williams Road.¹⁵⁸ Another auction plan prepared for the vendor by architects Inskip and Butler shows a resubdivision of many of the allotments to create the slightly smaller sites which remain today. However, some sites had already been sold and some appear to have been developed, with houses sketched onto the plan to indicate the style and quality of houses suited to the estate. Butler acquired the two allotments on the north-west corner of Tintern Avenue, building first a house, Studley in 1910. In 1918 he converted the house to flats and in 1922 more flats were built on what had been part of the garden, creating an interesting cluster of buildings.¹⁵⁹

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

154. National Trust File No. 229.

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

156. MMBW 1895 drainage plan.

157. Nigel Lewis & Associates, *Prahran Character and Conservation Study 1992*.

158. Tintern Estate. Toorak Road and Tintern Avenue. Haughton Plans, Vol. II, p.41, n.d.).

159. S. Wilde, *The History of Prahran. 1925-1990*, 1993, p. 64.

By this time, Woodside had lost virtually all its gardens to further housing in Woodside Crescent.¹⁶⁰

The distinctive features of the Tintern Avenue area today are the individually significant properties (Tintern, no. 10, no. 13 Tintern Avenue and the Studley Flats on the corner of Tintern Avenue and Toorak Road¹⁶¹), Walter Butler's Tintern subdivision and his Studley Flats development. A sequence of terrace houses and adjacent Edwardian houses in Williams Road combine with a number of intact small Victorian villas remaining in Woodside Crescent to create a Victorian and Edwardian component.

Description

The Area results from several periods of subdivision that converted two mansion estates into housing allotments.

Tintern Avenue, which retains the mansion Tintern, is unusual in its U-shaped form, both 'arms' being linked to Toorak Road. The houses within the street predominantly reflect the First World War and inter-war periods in which the precinct was subdivided and developed. Architecturally, the precinct includes examples of the Bungalow, English Revival and Georgian Revival styles common at this time. While the design intent was to create a precinct of detached houses set within garden allotments, development of large blocks of flats within part of the estate have affected this character.

Tintern Avenue retains bluestone kerb and guttering with narrow grass verges. The small tree and shrub species used in street plantings create an untidy appearance and seem to replace earlier trees, possibly Plane trees, two large examples of which remain at the southern end of the U. Planes were a popular street tree within the late nineteenth and early twentieth century precincts in Prahran and a number of good examples remain.

Woodside Crescent dates from the late nineteenth century and results from the subdivision of the grounds of Woodside. The gently curving alignment of the crescent probably reflects the earlier entry drive into Woodside from Williams Road. The house remains at no. 19 on a much reduced site. On the north side of the street are a series of asymmetrical brick villas, while on the south are a series of smaller, single fronted Victorian and Edwardian houses. The development of the southern side of Tintern Avenue extends through to Woodside Avenue, disrupting the sequence of Victorian houses. The street has been reconstructed and lost its original street material types. The street trees are mainly Brush Box, White Cedar and Poplars which create a leafy canopy along the street.

Heritage characteristics

The key heritage characteristics of the Tintern Avenue, Woodside Crescent, Williams Road Urban Conservation Area are:

160. Nigel Lewis & Associates, *Prahran Character and Conservation Study 1992*, p.38.

161. Nigel Lewis & Associates, *Prahran Conservation Study 1982*, p.6-6 to 6-8.

- the form and scale of residential buildings, created by the overlaying of the nineteenth century mansion estates with later nineteenth and early twentieth century housing, creating several distinct and relatively cohesive precincts within the Area.
- the consistent architectural quality of the First World War and inter-war housing in Tintern Avenue
- the design of the Tintern estate in terms of street form, materials (bluestone), allotment sizes and walkway through to Williams Road
- the sequence of asymmetrical Victorian houses on the north side of Woodside Crescent
- the alignment of Woodside Crescent which appears to reflect the former entrance drive to Woodside.

Analysis

The significance of the Area relates to the subdivision as a whole, thus justifying the inclusion of Woodside Crescent, which while much earlier, has been affected by the subsequent Butler development to the north. Inclusion of the flats, which do not contribute to the significance of the Area, would nevertheless better reflect the significance of the place as a whole, while also enabling Council to exercise development control over these sites in relation to the heritage significance of their setting.

Significance

Tintern Avenue, Woodside Crescent, Williams Road Urban Conservation Area has significance for its illustration of the processes of land development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and in particular the subdivision of mansion estates to create middle-class housing areas. Both mansion houses remain on substantially reduced allotments, and the entry to Woodside appears to have created the curving alignment of the crescent. The sequence of Victorian houses on the north side of Woodside Crescent represent the architecture of the period and create a strong, coherent grouping. Walter Butler's Tintern subdivision and own Studley Flats development provides an example of the work of this important architect, and evidence of the role of architects in designing whole estates.

Sources

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

Nigel Lewis & Associates, *Prahran Character and Conservation Study 1992*.

MMBW 1895 drainage plan.

Tintern Estate. Toorak Road and Tintern Avenue. Houghton Plans, Vol. II, p.41, n.d.

Wilde, S. *The History of Prahran, 1925-1990*, 1993, p. 64.

Recommendations

1. Adopt the UC1 Area as exhibited
2. Seek an extension to the Area to include the whole of Tintern Avenue within the Area. This means adding:
 - the three properties (26-30) on the north-eastern end of the western arm of Tintern Avenue
 - the large blocks of flats to the south of no. 26.