

# THE CAROLINE STREET PRECINCT

## HERITAGE PLACE CITATION

HO355

<b>NAME OF PLACE:</b>	The Caroline Street Precinct.
<b>OTHER NAMES OF PLACE:</b>	Part Alexandra Avenue Area, South Yarra Hill.
<b>ADDRESS / LOCATION:</b>	Nos 35-69 and 50-68 Avoca Street (excludes Nos 58 and 64 under existing individual heritage controls); 63-111 and 58-120 Caroline Street; 1-7 Davidson Street; 262A-272 and 269-273A Domain Road; 1-21 Gordon Grove (excludes No 8 under existing individual heritage control); 480-510 Punt Road (even Nos only).
<b>PROPERTY INFORMATION:</b>	Not available.
<b>EXISTING LISTINGS:</b>	This report reviews existing HO355 and part of existing HO122.
<b>LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE:</b>	Local.
<b>ASSESSED BY:</b>	John Statham, Heritage Advisor, City of Stonnington.
<b>ASSESSMENT DATE:</b>	May 2011. Updated May 2013 to include minor corrections to the attached Schedule of Buildings.

---

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### *What is significant?*

The Caroline Street area was among the first developed outside of the City of Melbourne. Situated on portions of the first lots, sold in the land sales of 1840, the pattern of the streets and some of the housing demonstrates local development during the 1840s and 1850s. The subdivisions and development that created Avoca and Caroline Streets retain some of the City of Prahran's earliest houses, once owned or occupied by notable colonists. Subsequent development from the 1850s through to the inter-war years, saw the creation of a precinct characterised by two-storey detached villas and flats, providing a remarkable display of changing architectural styles, while respecting the character established in the 1850s. The area is notable for the consistently high standards of design and construction across a century of development and for large number of individually significant buildings including the former Stables to Avoca at 103 Caroline Street, nineteenth century villas at 75, 76, 78 and 83 Caroline Street and the Beaver and Purnell-designed residence at 490 Punt Road.

The key heritage characteristics of the Caroline Street Precinct are:

- The intactness of the area to its mid-twentieth century state, with few prominent infill buildings, additions or obtrusive parking structures.

- The extent to which the early history of land subdivisions and development is reflected in the street pattern and some remaining structures.
- The largely consistent detached form and two-storey scale of buildings within the area. While the built form varies in terms of its architectural expression, it consistently illustrates the highest standards of design from the latter half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries.
- the retention of some traditional street materials in Avoca Street and along Domain Road.
- the open landscaped quality arising from the wide streets, the low scale of the built form and the generous garden setbacks associated with many of the dwellings.
- the avenue of plane trees along Caroline Street.
- The large number of buildings of high individual significance as reflected in their A1 and A2 gradings.

*How is it significant?*

The Caroline Street precinct is of local social, historical and aesthetic significance. Some individual buildings in this locale are significant at a State level. In some instances, these have been protected under individual heritage controls.

*Why is it significant?*

The area is historically significant as one of the earliest developed in the Municipality. The precinct is centred on two of the first six lots made available in the land sales of 1840 (*3.3.1 Crown land sales*). Developed from the 1850s onward, the area retains valuable examples of building stock from successive periods, including a very high concentration of 1850s buildings relative to that found in other parts of the Metropolitan region. Some buildings are historically significant in their own right. The diversity of periods and architectural character found in the built form is representative of the nature of development in South Yarra more broadly. This area is, historically, one of the most important in the Municipality.

The area is socially significant for the extent to which it reflects the aspirations of middle class residents in South Yarra. (*8.2.1 - Mansion estates and the high ground – Middle class estates in Prahran*). The elevated sites, the quality of the built form, the predominance of substantial free-standing villas and maisonette developments, the wide streets and large allotments reflect the affluence of its early and current residents.

The area is of local aesthetic significance for the quality of the building stock dating from the periods between 1850 and the end of the Second World War (*8.1 – Creating Australia's most prestigious suburbs*). It includes notable and handsome freestanding and attached houses, flats and maisonettes (*8.6.3 Architect designed apartments*). The street trees and undulating topography combine with the built form to produce streetscapes of outstanding quality.

**PHOTOS**



Figure 2 102 Caroline Street, South Yarra



Figure 3 Richmond House, 56 Caroline Street, South Yarra (protected under HO5)



Figure 4 Domain Road, South Yarra



Figure 5 Domain Road, South Yarra

## PLAN

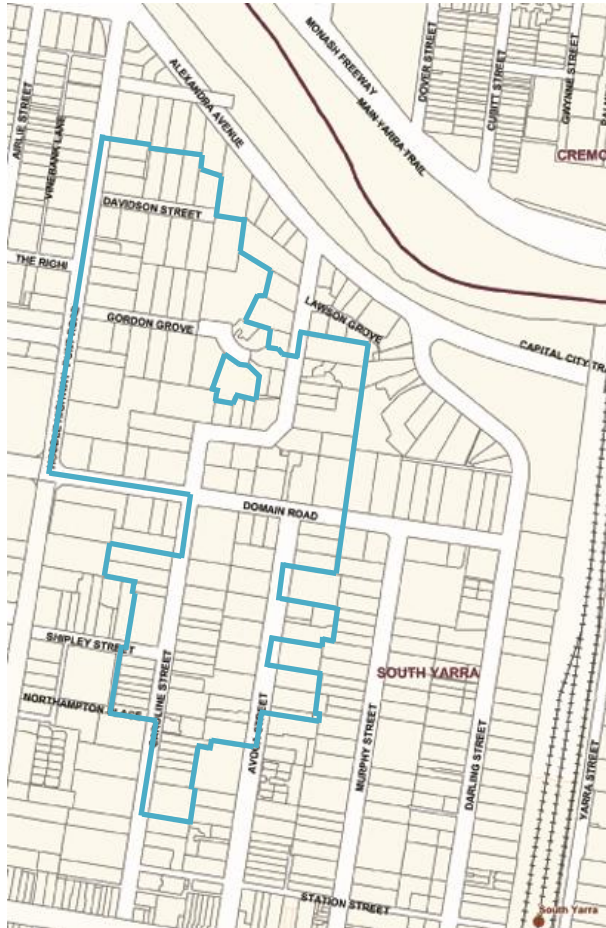


Figure 6 Extent of proposed HO area

## DESCRIPTION

At the close of the nineteenth century, Domain Road or, more precisely, the steep terrain and escarpments to its north, provided the northern barrier to the development of South Yarra Hill. To its south, a collection of substantial villas along wide streets had developed over the previous half century. However, from the early part of the twentieth century the area began a period of dramatic change through development of land around the escarpments and redevelopment of the polite suburb to its south.

What remains is a disparate but impressive group of buildings and styles incorporating houses, flats and institutional buildings on a variety of scales.<sup>1</sup> Early terraces remain at 62-68 Caroline Street and 92-94 Caroline Street, as do early villas such as 74, 76, 78 and 83 Caroline Street that recall the early Italianate flavour of the area. A handful of residences from the early years of the twentieth century survive. These include, the two-storey, red brick residence at 81 Caroline Street

---

1 Drawn with minor editing from, Bryce Raworth, *Avoca Street/Caroline Street, Proposed Conservation area*, pg.6.

and a group of Edwardian villas on Punt Road including the Beaver & Purnell-designed, orientally-inspired, residence at 490 Punt Road.

As a consequence of twentieth century subdivision and development of the Avoca Estate, the former coach house and stables to Avoca are today located in Caroline Street. The building was constructed before 1858 in English-sized (possibly 'Clagmannon 1845') bricks and retains scalloped bargeboards typical to nineteenth century stable designs.<sup>2</sup>

Otherwise, development in the northern sections of the precinct is typically younger than that found at Avoca and in the streets to its south. Domain Road was created in 1886 but little development to its north occurred prior to the twentieth century<sup>3</sup>. The northern sections of Caroline Street were created in 1922. While built form in these areas reflects their later construction dates, it continues themes of substantial, high quality two-storey residences including the Marcus Martin-designed Spanish Mission dwelling at the intersection of Caroline Street and Domain Road and Architect, Percy Meldrum's, own house at 106 Caroline Street.

Flats in the area include, elegant interwar structures such as the Bernard Evans-designed group at 55 Avoca Street and the Marcus Martin-designed maisonettes at 269 Domain Road and 70/72 Caroline Street. The majority of flats in the area are unobtrusive, broadly recalling the two-storey character of the area developed from the 1850s. However, developments from the late 1960s and 1970s, most notably 'Shipley' at corner of Shipley and Caroline Streets are typically at odds with the scale and character of the precinct. Large buildings associated with the Melbourne Girls' Grammar School's junior school, on Domain Road, with frontages to both Avoca and Caroline Streets, dominate the elevated sections of Avoca and Caroline Streets.

## HISTORY

*The following is largely drawn from Prahran Conservation Review, Nigel Lewis and Associates, 1983.*

Late in 1839 an extensive area of land to the east of Punt Road in South Yarra and Toorak was considered for alienation. Robert Hoddle forwarded the plans for these 'Suburban Allotments on the south side of the Yarra River' to Sydney on 1 February 1840. Part of this area had been included in an Aboriginal Reserve to the east of Punt Road. With the decision to sell these parcels, the Mission Station was relocated to an area to the west of Punt Road, near the present-day Botanical Gardens.

Six Crown allotments, bounded by the Yarra River, Gardiners Creek (now Toorak) Road, Punt Road and Chapel Street, were sold at the first Crown land sales in June 1840. Each had a frontage to Gardiners Creek (now Toorak) Road and stretched to the Yarra River. River frontages were valued and prices were relatively high. Consequently, most blocks were bought by speculators.<sup>4</sup>

Lot 1 was located between present day Punt Road and Caroline Street. RA Browne built a small villa named View Bank on Lot 1 which he let.<sup>5</sup> Around 1843, the house and allotment was sold to Major Alexander Davison, an Indian Army officer. He also bought Lot 2 from the original purchaser J Brewster. Davison left the property to his daughter Caroline and her husband Captain William

---

2 Nigel Lewis, *Prahran Conservation Study*, pg.1/10

3 Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works, *Detail Plan 947*, 1896.

4 Betty Malone, *Area 1*, pg.1.

5 *Ibid.*

Acland Anderson who remained there until about 1870. The estate, known as Davidson's Paddock, consisted of about twelve acres of garden, orchard, vineyard and swampy scrub and pasture.

In 1844, Davison sold Lot 2 to William Montgomery Bell. Bell lived at Avoca, which stretched from the line of Domain Road to the Yarra. The property boasted a boathouse, stables, a coach house, a caretaker's lodge, a lake, a formal garden, a fernery and a conservatory. Avoca was purchased by George Kirk in 1860 and later by the Alsop family. It survives today at 8 Gordon Grove where it is protected under an individual Heritage Overlay (HO45). The original coach house and stables were extended and altered through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but survive at 103 Caroline Street.

Lot 3 between modern-day Avoca and Murphy Streets was purchased by GR Griffiths who quickly sold it to John Robert Murphy, a brewer and wine and spirits merchant. Murphy did not develop the property but planted a vineyard on the northern slopes above the River<sup>6</sup>.

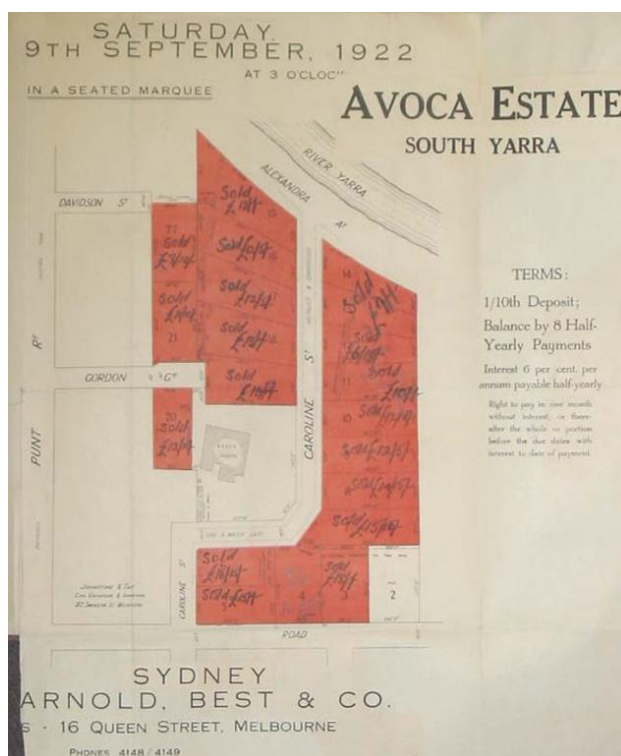
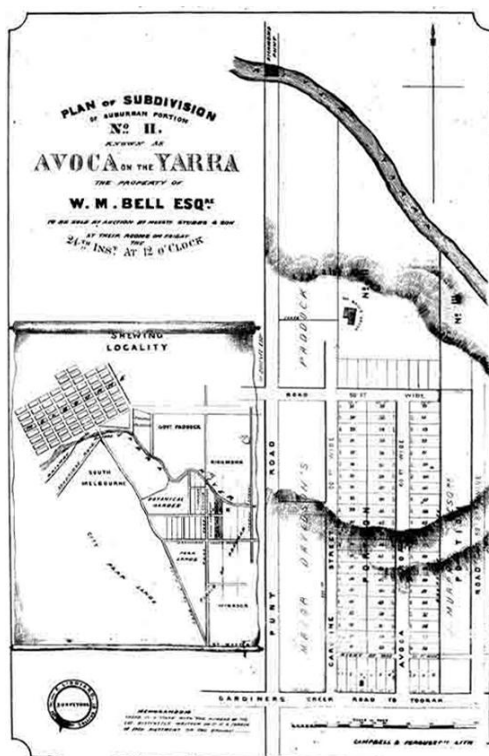


Figure 7 W&H Liddiard (Surveyors), Plan of Subdivision, Avoca on the Yarra, c1860 (Stonnington History Centre PH10384).

Figure 8 Sydney, Arnold, Best & Co, Plan of Subdivision, Avoca Estate, 9th September 1922 (Stonnington History Centre PH10815).

Subdivision of these early properties from the 1850s created housing allotments between Toorak Road and Domain Road, leaving the earlier homes on large sites close to the river.<sup>7</sup> Caroline Street, created as a result of Davison's 1853 subdivision of Lot 1, was named after his daughter. Following the subdivision, Yarra Bank survived on the south side of Davison Street and was later

6 Betty Malone, *Discovering Prahran, Area 1*, pg.1.

7 Context Pty Ltd, *Conservation Review, City of Prahran*, Vol. 3, pg.3.



used as a school.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Bell's subdivision of Avoca created Avoca Street. Kearney's map of 1855 shows Yarra Bank and Avoca with their grounds and vineyards extending to the river. South of the line of Domain Road, the new subdivisions featured wide streets and large allotments reflecting the area's affluence. Some of South Yarra's earliest houses remain in this area.<sup>9</sup> Construction of the South Yarra railway station further stimulated development in the area.

Only fragments of the early character of the area survive today.<sup>10</sup> The final subdivision of Avoca Estate in 1922 allowed development in this locale to continue through to the interwar years, and the construction of freestanding residences in Federation, bungalow and Georgian Revival styles began to overwrite the earlier character of the streets to the south. During this period the area retained the cachet established in its earliest days and the quality of the building stock remained high. In particular, the study area contains a number of maisonettes designed by Marcus W Martin, perhaps the most prominent and prolific domestic architect in the Toorak and South Yarra areas during the 1930s. These include: 78 Caroline Street; 269 Domain Road; and 69 Avoca Street. Residences by Martin survive at 102 and 104 Caroline Street and at 281 Domain Road.

However, it was during the post-war years that the most dramatic changes to the area were felt, as many of the older residences, such as 'Shiple House', were replaced with modern flats.<sup>11</sup> In 1957, Melbourne Girls' Grammar School's junior school, *Morris Hall*, was transferred to a large property on Domain Road with frontages to both Avoca and Caroline Streets,<sup>12</sup> in a move that would permanently alter the character of the elevated sections of both streets. One of the tragedies of this move was the associated demolition of the well known and admired house *Inglesby* (1918) designed by Harold Desbrowe Anear, at the corner of Domain Road and Caroline Street.

## ANALYSIS

### Thematic context

The precinct illustrates the following themes identified in the City of Stonnington Thematic Environmental History (Context Pty Ltd, 2006).

#### 3.3.1 - Crown land sales

#### 8.1 - Creating Australia's most prestigious suburbs

#### 8.2.1 - Mansion estates and the high ground – Middle class estates in Prahran)

#### 8.6.3 Architect-designed apartments.

### Comparative analysis

The area under consideration is unusual in comparison to most existing Heritage Overlay areas. In particular, it is heterogeneous in character and period rather than homogeneous. In this case, the variety of building stock can be seen as a natural result of the area's steady progression, with later periods of development overlaying earlier periods as well as complementing neighbouring older stock.<sup>13</sup>

---

8 Jane Chatham, *Across the Slate, Prahran's Schools 1850s-1985*, pg.13.

9 Context Pty Ltd, *op cit*, pg.3.

10 Drawn with minor editing from, Bryce Raworth, *Avoca Street/Caroline Street, Proposed Conservation area*, pg.4.

11 Drawn with minor editing from, Bryce Raworth, *Avoca Street/Caroline Street, Proposed Conservation area*, pg.5

12 Chatham, Jane, *Across the Slate, Prahran's Schools 1850s - 1985*, Prahran Historical Series No. 3. 1985.

13 Drawn with minor editing from, Bryce Raworth, *Avoca Street/Caroline Street, Proposed Conservation area*, pg.5.

It is especially unusual to find a small area containing so many houses built in the 1850s including: 56 Avoca Street (HO5), 64 Avoca Street, 75 Caroline Street, 76 Caroline Street and, in part, 83 Caroline Street).<sup>14</sup>

In this relatively small area it is possible to see exemplars of better domestic architecture from almost all periods in Melbourne's history and this diversity can be seen to embody the character of South Yarra as a whole. Its prominent location and its proximity to Melbourne are such that it has always been a select, much sought after area, and this has encouraged high quality accommodation. This is reflected in the gradings of individual buildings. Few other areas in Stonnington contain a similar concentration of A1 and A2 buildings, interspersed with high quality B grade buildings.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the citation for HO355, Bryce Raworth noted:

*The proposed area continues and extends architectural and historical themes established in the neighbouring urban conservation area to the north, and can be seen to complement and even complete that area both thematically and visually.*

The northern section of HO122 to Alexandra Avenue was constructed, to a large extent, by a single architect. It is reasonably uniform in terms of its character and building type across the escarpment. That area benefits from the landscaped character of Alexandra Avenue, Darling Gardens and the Yarra bank environs more generally.

The streetscapes in the southern sections of HO122 centred on Punt Road, Domain Road and the northern parts of Caroline Street are more diverse, incorporating important early buildings alongside interwar residences and flats. This area is, generally speaking, a broad collection of substantial, high quality residences constructed between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. Built form of this type should more reasonably be included in HO355.

It is recommended that the shared boundary of HO355 is extended northwards to the extent shown in Figure 1. In addition to the existing addresses, HO355 should be revised to include:

- 102-120 and 97-111 Caroline Street
- 1-7 Davidson Street;
- 262A-272 Domain Road;
- 1-21 Gordon Grove (excluding No 8 under existing heritage control);
- 480-510 Punt Road (even Nos only).

The boundary to HO122 should also be reconsidered to capture only the most consistent and appropriate built form (refer separate document).

---

14 Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, *Prahran Character and Conservation Study*, pg.12.



The key early buildings within this precinct, namely *Avoca* at 8 Gordon Grove, *Richmond House* at 56 Avoca Street and the early residence at 64 Avoca Street are currently protected as buildings of high individual significance. However, HO355 benefits from the presence of these elements 'within' the precinct and these early buildings derive a suitable context from, and share a similar lineage to, early buildings in nearby streets. The Department of Planning and Community Development currently permits only one Heritage Overlay to any single site. A building under an individual heritage control can not also be protected as part of a precinct. However, the buildings noted above are important both individually and for their contribution to HO355. If, as is anticipated, Departmental policy in relation to this matter changes, Council should reconsider the mapping and citation for HO355 as they relate to these buildings.

As noted above, the avenue of mature plane trees to either side of Caroline Street dates from the period of significance (they appear as well-developed elements in 1945 aerial photograph of the area held by the Education Research Centre, University of Melbourne) and contribute to the character and setting of the valued built form. Appropriate steps should be taken to safeguard these landscape elements.

## SCHEDULE OF GRADINGS

### AVOCA STREET (west side)

Street No.	Grading	Description
35	B	Interwar villa
37/39	B	Interwar semi-detached pair
53	B	Interwar villa
55	B	c.1960s flats
59	B	<i>Cardrew</i> , interwar flats
61	A2	Interwar villa
67	B	C19 villa
69	A2	House (see also 271 Domain Road)

### AVOCA STREET (east side)

Street No.	Grading	Description
50	U	Postwar villa
52	A2	Interwar villa
54/54A	U	Postwar semi-detached pair
56	Refer HO5	
60	A2	C19 villa
62/62A	U	c.1990s flats
64	Refer HO6	
66	U	Postwar villa
68	U	Postwar villa
70	A2	C19 villa

### CAROLINE STREET (east side)

Street No.	Grading	Description
58	A2	C19 villa
60	A2	Interwar villa
62/64/66/68	A2	C19 terrace row
70/72	B	Interwar maisonettes
74	A1	C19 villa
76	A1	C19 villa
78	B	C19 villa
80	A2	C19 villa
82	C	c.1960s villa remodelled c.2005
84	C	c.1970s villa
86	U	c.1960s villa
90	C	c.1970s villa remodelled c.2010
92/94	B	C19 semi-detached pair
96	U	School
102	A2	Interwar villa
104	C	Interwar villa
106	B	Interwar villa
106A	U	Postwar villa
106B	U	Substation
108	U	C2000s villa
108A	C	Interwar villa at rear of 108
110	C	c.1960s Flats
112A/112B/114/116	C	Interwar flats
118	C	Interwar flats
120	A2	Interwar flats

**CAROLINE STREET (west side)**

<b>Street No.</b>	<b>Grading</b>	<b>Description</b>
63/65	B	Interwar semi-detached pair
67/69/71	B	Interwar terrace row
73	B	Edwardian villa
75	A1	C19 villa
77	U	<i>Shipley</i> , post war-flats
81	B	Federation villa
83	A1	C19 villa
85	U	c.1960s flats
87	U	c.1960s flats
97	C	c.1960s flats
99	C	c.1960s flats
101	C	c.1960s flats
103	A1	Former stables to <i>Avoca</i>
105/107	C	Interwar semi-detached pair
109	A2	'Broadchalke' Interwar flats
111	C	Interwar villa

**DAVIDSON STREET (north side)**

<b>Street No.</b>	<b>Grading</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	U	c.1960s flats
3	U	c.1960s flats
5	B	Interwar villa
7	U	c.1960s flats

**DAVIDSON STREET (south side)**

<b>Street No.</b>	<b>Grading</b>	<b>Description</b>
2	U	c.1960s flats
2A	U	c.1960s flats
4	U	c.1960s flats
6	U	c.1960s flats

**DOMAIN ROAD (north side)**

<b>Street No.</b>	<b>Grading</b>	<b>Description</b>
262A	A2	Nineteenth century villa
262	U	Apartment building. c.2006.
264	A2	Interwar villa
266	A2	Interwar villa
268A	U	Modern villa c.2006
268	B	Interwar villa
270	B	Interwar villa
272	B	Interwar villa

**DOMAIN ROAD (south side)**

<b>Street No.</b>	<b>Grading</b>	<b>Description</b>
269	C	Interwar flats
271	B	Interwar flats (see 69 Avoca Street)
273A	A2	c.1990s villa (addresses Caroline Street)
273	U	c.2000s villa

**GORDON GROVE (north side)**

<b>Street no.</b>	<b>Grading</b>	<b>Description</b>
1A	B	Victorian villa (addresses Punt Road)
1	B	Federation villa
3	B	Interwar flats
5	B	Edwardian villa
7	A2	Interwar villa
9	A2	Interwar villa
15	B	Interwar flats
19	B	c.1960s villa (addresses Caroline Street)
21	B	Interwar villa

**GORDON GROVE (south side)**

<b>Street no.</b>	<b>Grading</b>	<b>Description</b>
2B	A1	Edwardian villa (formerly 490 Punt Road)
2A	U	c.1980s villa
2	U	c.1970s flats
4A	U	c.1960s flats
4	U	c.1960s flats
6	B	Interwar villa
8	Refer HO45	

**PUNT ROAD (east side)**

<b>Street no.</b>	<b>Grading</b>	<b>Description</b>
480	B	Interwar villa
484-6	A2	C19 villa
498	A2	C19 villa
500	A2	Edwardian villa
502	A2	C19 villa (interwar flat at rear)
504	U	c.1960s flats
504A	U	Vacant site
506	A2	Edwardian villa
508	A2	Edwardian villa
510	A2	Edwardian villa

## REFERENCES

- Context Pty Ltd, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2006, updated 2009.
- Jane Chatham, *Across the Slate, Prahran's Schools 1850s-1985*, Prahran Historical Series No.8, 1985.
- Context Pty Ltd., *Prahran Conservation Review*, Vol.3 1993.
- Nigel Lewis et al, *Prahran Character and Conservation Study*, 1992.
- Nigel Lewis, *Prahran Conservation Study*, Identification of Buildings and Areas of major significance, 1983.
- Betty Malone, *Discovering Prahran, Area 1*, 1998.
- Bryce Raworth, *A Question Of Style*, unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1993.
- Sands & McDougall Postal Directories, various editions.
- Sally Wilde, *The History of Prahran*, Vol II, 1925-1990, Melbourne 1993.
- Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works, *Detail plan 947*, 1896.
- Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, *Avoca Street/Caroline Street Proposed Conservation Area*, March 1998
- W&H Liddiard (Surveyors), *Plan of Subdivision, Avoca on the Yarra*, c1860, Stonnington History Centre online collection, PH10384.
- Sydney, Arnold, Best & Co, *Plan of Subdivision, Avoca Estate, 1922*, Stonnington History Centre online collection, PH10815.