2.7 THE RIALTO AREA

The Rialto Area represents the post-World War II greenfields development that occurred in the eastern part of the municipality which led to the residential development of the remaing farmland. The area is significant due to the unusual configuration of the street pattern around the former open drain and the uniform development of post War cream brick villas.

- 1857: Plan of suburban allotments at Gardiner, Parish of Prahran shows this area along Gardiner's Creek as 'low, flat flooded after heavy rain ... light sandy soil ... [several banks of] tea tree'. The allotments are shown as 196 and 195 Police Reserve and 194 was sold to J Quirk.
- c.1920: Lot 5 of the Craigmore and Twickenham Estates, Malvern East shows most of the Rialto allotment which was formerly the Crown Allotment 195. (Alway Plan Book 2 No 19)
- 1924: Street layout created by LP10109, lodged 20.6.1924
- c.1929: Aerial photograph shows the Outer Circle railway with timber trestle bridge crossing Gardiner's Creek, sleepers, track and telegraph wires intact but breached by the Glen Waverley railway line. It also shows a formed drain running through the site. There are no structures but several houses to the south of Waverley Road.
- 1937: MMBW plan shows allotments of subdivision.
- c.1937-45: 'Malvern Meadows Estate the most charmingly situated home sites within the Malvern Municipal Area', subdivision plan, T M Burke Pty Ltd (Alway Plan Book 4 No 13)

The Rialto area is located on the previously undeveloped farm land between Gardiner's Creek, the Outer Circle railway and Waverley Road. It remained undeveloped at the time that the Glen Iris railway was extended to Glen Waverley and cut through the existing embankment of the Outer Circle railway. The land was generally low lying and swampy, with a large drain running through on the present day site of the Rialto.

The low lying topography and drainage reserve has created the unusual open space characteristic of the Rialto and its unusual plan form. This area was uniformly developed after the first house on the estate was built on allotment 163 in 1947 (1). This has led to the prevailing building type being characteristic post-War cream brick villas with terracotta roofs. The building stock is more consistent on the higher northern side than the lower side. The alignment of the street and the open reserve is the most interesting feature of this area. The general level of intactness of the houses is high.

1 W K Allen, first occupant of Allotment 163, pers.comm.

