

Williams Road Urban Conservation Area [Area 11.2]

Extent

The Williams Road Urban Conservation Area comprises the eastern side of Williams Road from the former fire station south of Aberdeen Road almost to Robinson Street, plus a smaller group between Murray and Clarke Streets on the west side of Williams Road.

History

This area along the eastern side of Williams Road between Commercial (now Malvern) Road and High Street showed signs of development as early as the middle-1850s. James Kearney's 1855 map of the area showed a number of narrow streets, small allotments and some buildings at the south end of Williams Road near High Street.¹⁶⁹ Further north near Commercial (now Malvern) Road, the area was mainly an undeveloped, wooded area at this time.

During the next forty years, following the gold era early development, an even more rapid expansion took place. The small detached weatherboard houses in narrow streets at the south-eastern corner now became established as a development pattern as far north as Spring Road. On the other hand, the allotments facing Williams Road were substantial single and double storey detached houses.¹⁷⁰ The Rinoldi Spaghetti factory was founded in 1894, at first in a factory off Williams Road, and later in Aberdeen Street.¹⁷¹

The nineteenth century character of this Prahran precinct has continued into the present century. The mansion on the intersection of Williams Road and Malvern Road (shown on the 1890s plan) had been replaced by commercial developments. Although a service station and flats interrupts the original sequence of buildings down to Aberdeen Street, most of the eastern side of Williams Road remains as an area where prominent and imposing Victorian terraces are located, as well as detached single storey villas.

Description

Williams Road, a busy transport route today, contains a sequence of Victorian houses on both sides of the road, with the best examples being the asymmetrical villas at the north-eastern end of the Area and opposite on the corner of Clarke Street, the two storey terrace (nos. 131-135) with return verandahs and 'candle-snuffer' roof on a low tower at each end of the main facade. The remarkable consistency in the asymmetrical villas suggests a single period of development, and possibly a single developer or builder.

Further south, the Area is more diverse with later Edwardian and inter-war houses interspersed with Victorian houses and a prominent two storey terrace.

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

170. MMBW 1895 drainage plan.

171. S. Wilde, *The History of Prahran*. 1925-1990, p. 150.

Williams Road retains the traditional street construction materials, using asphalt for the roadway and footpath and sawn bluestone for the kerb and guttering. Plane trees have recently been planted and are set into the paved footpath; there are no grass verges.

Heritage characteristics

The key heritage characteristics of the Williams Road Urban Conservation Area are:

- the consistent form, detailing, style and setback on the eastern side of Williams Road, especially within the grouping of asymmetrical villas at the northern end, which is characteristic of a middle-class nineteenth century housing area.
- the two prominent terraces, one on each side of the road, are dominant elements and focal points within the Area
- the continuing residential use as the predominant land use (with some conversion to commercial uses noted from the field work)
- the retention of traditional street materials on both sides of Williams Road.

Analysis

The extent of the Williams Road Urban Conservation Area as currently defined includes the main sequences of nineteenth century housing which create the character of this Area. No change to the extent is proposed.

Significance

Williams Road Urban Conservation Area has significance as a sequence of nineteenth century middle class housing, displaying both single storey villas and two storey terraces, which form a coherent precinct and provide evidence of the stylistic tastes of the period.

Sources

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

MMBW 1895 drainage plan.

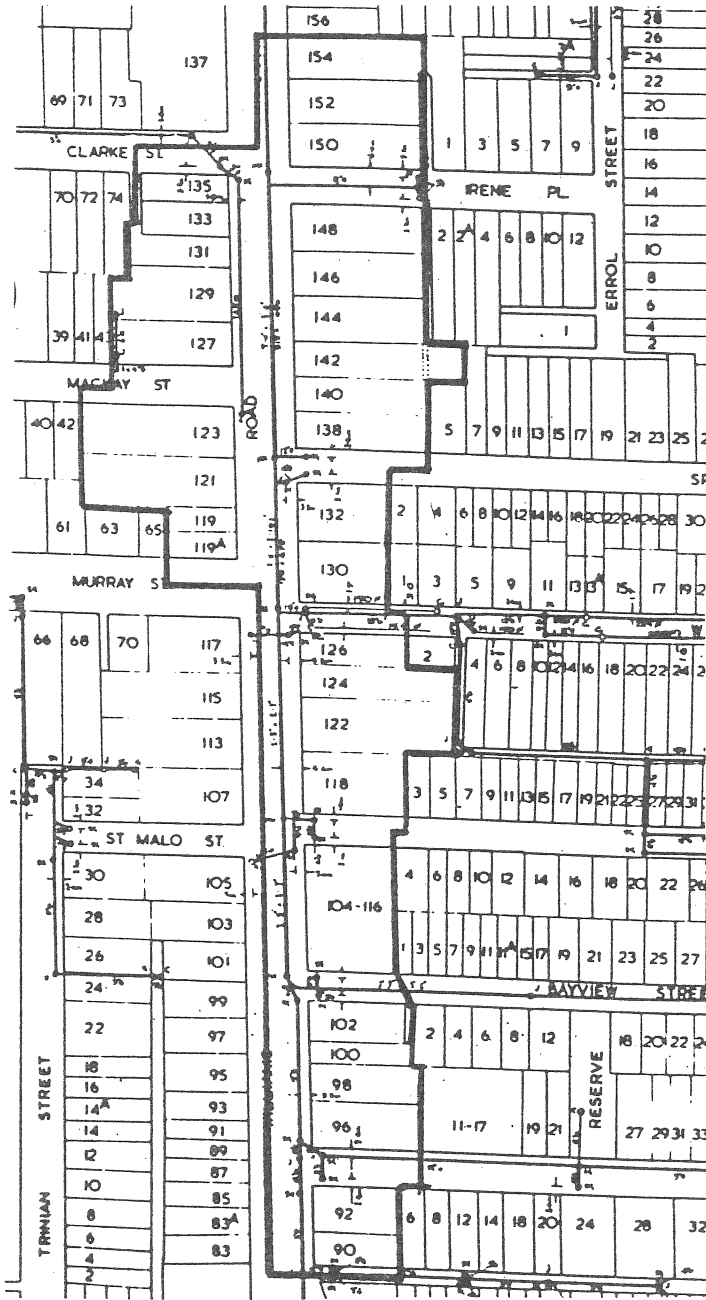
Wilde, S. *The History of Prahran 1925-1990*, 1993.

Recommendations




1. Adopt the UCI Area as exhibited.

Map

Williams Road Urban Conservation Area [Area 11.2]



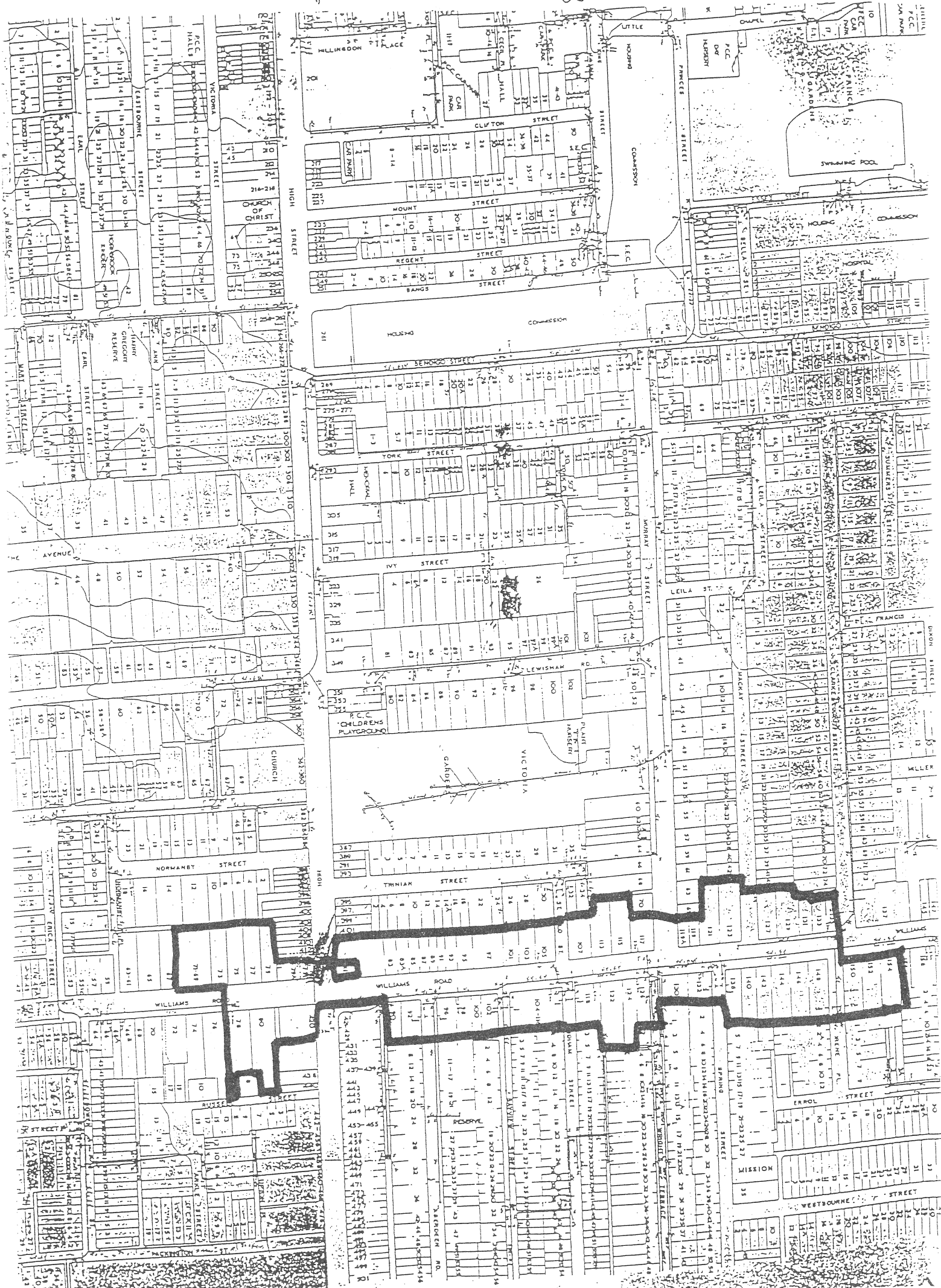
Legend

-  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.

Regional L.A.

Williams Road



SCALE OF METRES

