Coolgardie Avenue Proposed Conservation Area



INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd in association with Di Foster, historian, in order to investigate the significance of the area centred on Coolgardie and Melrose Avenues, and to determine the appropriateness of urban conservation controls for the precinct.

The analysis builds on the relevant findings of Seamus O'Hanlon, Melbourne's Interwar Housing Survey, prepared on behalf of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), 1989.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This report finds that the Coolgardie Avenue area is of regional significance as a fine and largely intact interwar suburban development. It is recommended that the area be protected as an Urban Conservation Area under the Stonnington Planning Scheme and be nominated to the Register of the National Estate.

EXTENT OF PROPOSED URBAN CONSERVATION AREA

The proposed Urban Conservation Area comprises the following: all addresses in Albert Street, Melrose Avenue and Coolgardie Avenue, and 361-417 Waverley Road and 1908-2004 Malvern Road.

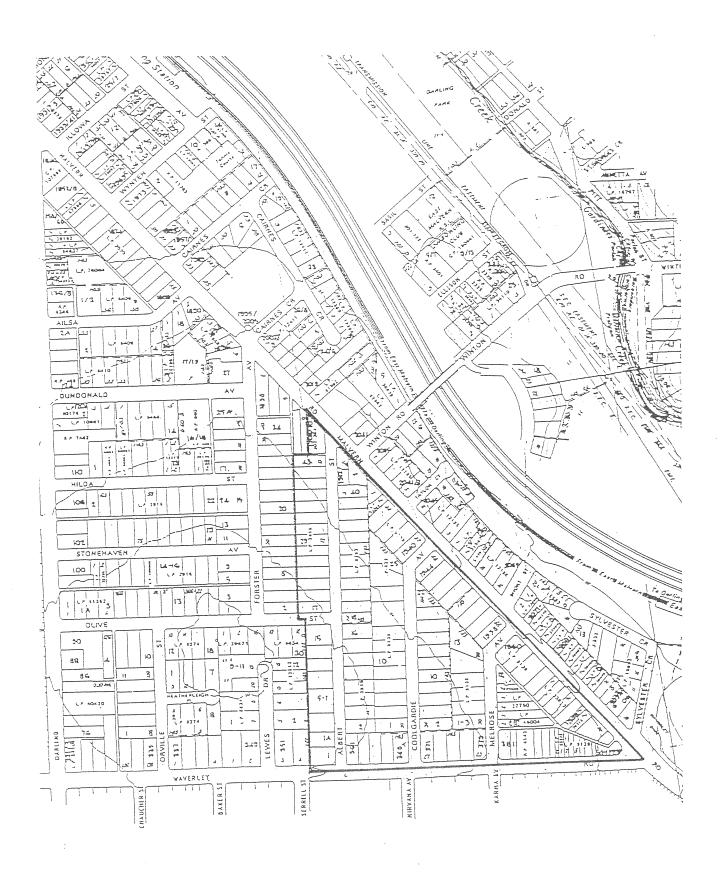


Illustration 1 Extent of proposed Conservation Area.

The first sales of Crown Land in the area that was to become the City of Malvern, took place on the 10th June 1840. The area had been surveyed and divided into large allorments suitable for market gardens and farms. Pastoralists had previously moved into the area, but the first sales of land in the north west of the district, initiated the beginnings of permanent settlement.

Commercial Road, High Street and other main roads that were already established in the west, were extended east. Created as a government road in 1854, Commercial Road, east of Chapel Street, was renamed Malvern Road in 1867 and east of Tooronga Road, it was named Lower Malvern Road until 1928. Malvern Road continued east as far as Gardiners Creek, the parish boundary. When the road reached the creek it turned south-east and followed the creek along one of the old tracks to Dandenong.² Waverley Road, also created in 1854, was known as Scotchman's Creek Road until 1872.

As the Crown allotments sold, purchasers moved east and in 1857 allotment 164 was sold to Rody Heffernan.3 Heffernan's land was located at the intersection of Malvern and Waverley Roads. Lot 164 consisted of more than 14 acres and in 1863 Heffernan sold the allotment to Robert Benson. Benson, founder of the Metropolitan Permanent Building Society⁴ and member of the Gardiner Road Board, lived at Belgrave on the corner of Bensons (Belgrave) Road and Dandenong Road. The Gardiner Road Board had been established in 1856 and Benson became Chairman in 1864. He served on the Council for more than 25 years, serving several terms as Shire President.5

Lot 164 was brought under the Transfer of Land Act in 1871.6 Crown allotment 163, to the west of Heffernan's land, was included in the subdivision of the Glen Iris Park Estate in 1890.⁷ The allotment had been purchased by Edward Charsley in 1858. Charsley, a solicitor, owned many acres of land in the Gardiner district. Charsley moved from Pine Hill near Glenferrie Road and settled at Hedgeley Dene Farm in 1874.

Despite the activities of these speculators, small farms, orchards and market gardens were established east of Glenferrie Road.9 The Woodmason family were successful market gardeners and dairy farmers, with substantial land holdings throughout the district. From 1859 the family owned land at the corner

Rob Bower, Malvern, 1840-1989, A history of the subdivision, plan 11.

Georgina Whitehead, Appendix A: 'A physical history, Malvern urban character study' Malvern, 2 1989, p.2.

Rob Bower, Malvern, 1840-1989, A history of the subdivision, plan 11. 3

The Prahran Telegraph, September 8, 1888, p.5. 4

Minutes of Gardiner Road Board and Malvern Shire Council. 1863 - 1890 5

Bower, plan 11.

Glen Iris Park Estate, subdivision and sale, undated, c. 1890. State Library of Victoria Collection.

⁸ Charsley, family history file, Malvern Archives.

Georgina Whitehead, Appendix A: 'A physical history, Malvern urban character study' Malvern, 1989, p.3.

of Glenferrie Road and Malvern Road, where William Woodmason cultivated a highly successful market garden. 10 Woodmason was Shire President and a long serving member of the Malvern Council. On his death in 1892, his son, William James Woodmason, took over the dairy and his father's prize winning jersey herd. Woodmason became a breeder of pure breed jersey cattle 11 and the herd was noted as one of the best in Victoria, winning several championships at the Royal Melbourne Show. 12

Woodmason's Melrose Dairy was established at the corner of Glenferrie Road and Malvern Road. Jersey cows were also kept at Twickenham in Waverley Road, where Woodmason had established a second Melrose Dairy. He used land at the comer of Malvern Road and Waverley Road to grow maize in order to feed his famous Melrose jersey herd. 13 The story is that Woodmason had named this area Coolgardie, according to his belief that land represented a fortune sound as gold. 14

William James Woodmason had occupied Coolgardie, known as Crown allotment 164, since the 1890s, when it appears he had leased the vacant land from the executors of the previous owner, Robert Benson. 15 By the turn of the century, Woodmason had become the owner of the land, and a weatherboard house of 4 rooms had been erected facing Lower Malvern Road. 16 A succession of tenants, assumed to be managers of Woodmason's property, included Henry Mackney, Archibald Campbell, George Sangster, Archibald Haddon, William Grover and William Doyle. 17 The 1916 Board of Works plan shows Woodmason's triangle of land bounded by Albert Street, Malvern Road and Waverley Road, undeveloped except for the small house and outbuilding with a frontage to Malvern Road. Albert Street had been created in 1890 with the subdivision of the Glen Iris Park Estate, 18 leaving the triangle of undeveloped land. Woodmason may have acquired the allotments at the south end of Albert Street, part of allotment 163, at this time.

In 1922 Woodmason decided to release the Coolgardie land for subdivision. 19 The same year he also put up for sale a large area of grazing land east of Warrigal Road.20 Woodmason retained a portion of this land where he built his new home, Green Gables, in Waverley Road.21 The following year Woodmasons Ice Works were built in Glenferrie Road.

Who's Who, 1927, p.891. 11

Woodmason, family history file, Malvern Archives. 13

Malvern Rate Book, East Ward, 1895. 15

Sands and Mc Dougall directory, 1906-1921. 17

Lodged Plan 2915, 10.7.1890. Bower, Vol 1, roads, plan 11, p. 85. 18

Auction sale, subdivisional areas at East Malvern, 25 May, 1922. Malvern Archives 20

Victoria and its Metropolis, Vol. 2. 1888, (Melbourne) p.699. 10

Woodmason, family history file, Malvern Archives 12

Lynne Strahan, Private and public memory, a history of Malvern, p.77 14

Malvern Rate Book, East Ward, 1901. 16

W. Woodmason, Malvern Park Estate. Sale notice and subdivision plan. 11 November, 1922. 19 Malvern Archives.

^{&#}x27;Brick residence, Waverley Road, East Malvern for W. Woodmason.' Malvern building plan, 1922, 21 plan no. 3982.

When the Coolgardie land was released for sale, most of the surrounding areas had been subdivided into housing allotments. Following the end of the First World War, with the improved economy and the demand for new housing, building activity increased dramatically. The tram had run to the terminus at Darling Road since 1913 and the proposed new railway station at East Malvern was a short walk from Woodmason's new estate.

Woodmason advertised the Malvern Park Estate as 'Malvern's greatest land sale'. ²² On November 11 1922, auctioneers Coghill and Haughton offered for sale sixty villa and fifty shop sites. To entice the purchaser, the sales brochure featured photos of Malvern's grander homes with glowing descriptions of the rapidly growing East Ward.

The subdivision of Mr W. Woodmason's Malvern Park Estate well serves a dual purpose in the rich and rapidly growing East Ward of the City of Malvern. It will provide a great shopping centre at the junction of two important highways (along which Malvern's Tramway extensions are projected). Not only this, but the further extension of the Glen Iris Electric Railway Service will leave a station practically opposite the Estate. So the big strides the East Ward records today will be left far behind tomorrow. Buyers will not be visualising how much faster can the East Ward grow, but will wonder if they will be lucky enough to secure one of the very select Home Sites on Malvern Park Estate or one of the Shop Sites at this great junction.

Woodmason named the new streets, which were formed in experimental concrete, Coolgardie Avenue and Melrose Avenue. Building began a few years later and the proposed shop sites at the corner of Malvern and Waverley Roads were eventually reduced in number. The estate included the south east side of Albert Street and this section was the first to be developed. By 1928^{23} all the houses had been built in this section except for number 16, designed in 1936 by architects Reid and Pearson for Ernest Batten.²⁴

Five years after the sale of the estate, the annual report noted that the area was experiencing the greatest building activity in the municipality. By 1929 the railway had been extended to Glen Waverley and most of the houses had been built in Coolgardie Avenue. Most were designed and built by builders with local builder David Armstrong being responsible for numbers 3, 13, 15 and 22. One of the few architect designed houses in the estate is number 371 Waverley Road on the east corner of Coolgardie Avenue, designed by Gawler & Drummond in 1925.

25 Strahan, p.77

W. Woodmason, Malvern Park Estate. Sale notice and subdivision plan. 11 November, 1922. Malvern Archives.

²³ Sands & McDougall Directory, 1928

²⁴ Malvern building plan, 16 Albert Street.

²⁶ Malvern building plans. Nos. 9835, 9874, 10062.

²⁷ Malvern building plan no. 5463

Melrose Avenue developed later than Coolgardie and although the first house, number 11, was built by 1930, building did not commence on the east side until 1939. Here, three pairs of villa flats (numbers 2-4, 6-8, 10-12) were designed and built by builders in the 1940s.²⁸

The Australian Home Beautiful in 1932 illustrated newly built houses in Malvern Road at the corner of Melrose Avenue. The journal recorded that this development completed 'a block of good class residences in East Malvern' and in that year 'Malvern [led] the suburbs in the increasing number of building permits issued between November and March.'29

The depression years slowed development however, and very little building occurred east of Belgrave Road until the economy improved. Aerial photographs taken around 1932 show a clear line of development ending at Belgrave Road. Building in Coolgardie Avenue appears almost complete, with vacant land east of Melrose Avenue, with the exception of the newly built house on the corner of Malvern Road and Melrose Avenue, and a small saw-toothed roof factory facing Malvern Road.³⁰ This factory, presently occupied by a dry cleaning company was first occupied by a furniture manufacturer. 31

DESCRIPTION

The Coolgardie Avenue area comprises a triangle of development located west of the intersection of Malvern and Waverly Roads. Melrose Avenue, Coolgardie Avenue and Albert Street connect the two larger thoroughfares, but the curving layout of these narrow streets discourages through traffic. Consequently, the noise and fumes associated with high traffic volumes on the perimeter of the area are not a feature of the streets within.

Roads in the area are typically paved in bitumen. However, Melrose and Coolgardie avenues have retained their original concrete road surfaces. Footpaths and crossovers are of modern concrete construction. All the streets in the area have nature strips planted with lawn and trees which complement the well maintained domestic gardens.

The housing stock throughout the area consists of interwar villas and bungalows, but the general character of the built fabric varies from street to street.

Albert Street is lightly planted with a selection of modest villas and bungalows behind low fences of timber and rendered brick.

The Australian Home Beautiful, May 2, 1932. 29

Malvern building plans, 2-4, 6-8, 10-12 Melrose Avenue. Malvern Archives. 28

A set of six photos were taken of East Malvern around 1932 to show the new East Malvern Golf 30 Course. Collection in Malvern Archives.

Sands & McDougall Directory, 1934, Lower Malvern Road, between Melrose Avenue and Waverley 31 Road, T.B. Farrar, furn. manager.

Coolgardie Avenue is heavily planted and mature trees create a canopy above the street. It contains more substantial houses and greater proportion of villas. The street is especially noteworthy for a number of residences which draw inspiration from Spanish Revival sources with decorative devices realised in render (Nos 11, 13 and 14). It also contains a small number of larger bungalows (Nos 5 & 7). Some early fences in rendered brick survive.

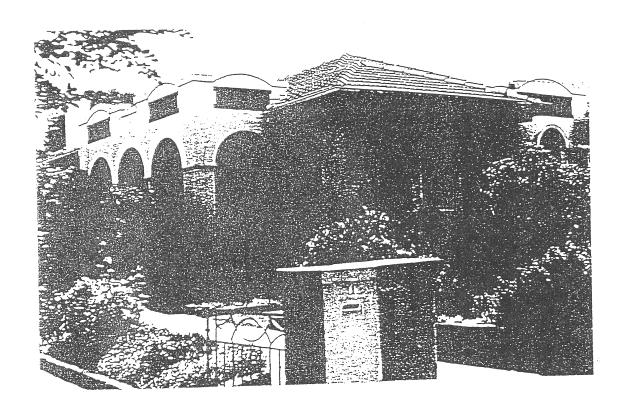


Illustration 3 Typical villa.

Melrose Avenue also enjoys a canopy of mature trees although housing stock is more eclectic than other streets in the area. Red brick predominates and houses draw more heavily on Tudor and Old English Revival sources with steep roof pitches and half timbering occurring. Timber fences predominate.

The housing stock on the major roads tends towards more impressive villas, which are generally situated on larger allotments. The integrity and condition of this group deteriorates towards the intersection of Malvern Road and Waverley Road.

The area is generally in good, original condition with few intrusive developments. Some first floor and garage additions have occurred, front gardens have frequently been modified to provide off-street car parking and few original fences remain. However, these changes have not significantly altered the early character of this interwar suburban development.

The Coolgardie Avenue area is a mature, fine and largely intact example of an interwar garden estate developed for a middle-class clientele. Developed in a more conventional or traditional manner than innovative garden suburb estates such as Lempriere Grove, East St Kilda, the Walter Burley Griffin estates at Heidelberg, or the later A.V. Jennings estates at Murrumbeena and Heidelberg, the Coolgardie and Melrose Avenue area broadly follows the traditional grid alignment of Melbourne's suburbs. Each allotment was developed separately, with a range of builders and a few architects contributing designs. Despite their similarities in detail and form, each house is presented as a distinct entity rather than a unit within a larger designed environment. In this they are representative of conventional suburban residential development in the 1920s, albeit providing a standard of accommodation more substantial than much to be found in neighbouring streets.

Direct comparison in this regard can be made with the nearby, contemporary War Service Homes Estate of Villers and Bretonneux Squares and other small contingent suburban estates directly south of Coolgardie and Melrose Avenues. These feature a predominance of smaller timber villas, interspersed with masonry villas and set on shallow allotments. Whereas a number of the streets in these estates feature established trees and gardens not dissimilar to those found at Coolgardie and Melrose, the overall character of the streets is dramatically different due to the impact of house and allotment size.

The development also illustrates the contemporary vogue for subdivisions featuring a bend or curve to the road, and thus avoiding too strong a sense of the traditional suburban grid. While this bend also seems to have served a practical purpose, allowing a drainage easement a regular line along the rear of properties fronting Malvern Road, it is not a common feature in the area. While the device is not to be compared with slightly earlier, notably curvilinear subdivisions such as those prepared by Walter Burley Griffin, most notably the Glenard Estate, Ivanhoe, or the Mont Eagle estate, Ivanhoe, which display a true commitment to the eradication of straight streets and a consistent use of curving streets and culs-desac, it allows north facing vistas along the street to close on trees and gardens, giving a sense of enclosure and protection similar to that experienced in contemporary culs-de-sac.

The use of concrete to pave the roads is also a feature which is associated with a small number of interwar subdivisions, such as the Golf Links Estate, Camberwell, Heatherleigh Place, East Malvern, Linden Court, Armadale, and Jessamine Avenue, Armadale, and the Glen Alvie Estate, Mount Waverley, but remains rare within Melbourne's suburbs generally. As a result it accentuates the interwar character of the streets within which it is found.

The housing stock is of a high quality, and though no individual houses are exceptional, the consistency of their period of construction, scale, setbacks and integrity to an original appearance has become increasingly rare in Melbourne's inner suburbs. The houses, ranging in style from Spanish Mission to bungalow and Old English Revival, demonstrate the eclectic approach to design and applied ornament typical of the building profession at this time; the associated emphasis on distinctive and individual house design for each allotment ensures diversity within what otherwise presents as a coherent and unified environment. Their use of masonry rather than timber is notable for the late 1920s, and anticipates the emphasis upon brick (and sometimes concrete) construction in builder-developer estates of the mid- to late 1930s.

The level of integrity of the housing to its original design and construction is generally high. While numerous streets within Melbourne contain houses of similar materials, stylistic expression and scale, few streets have retained their housing stock with so few changes. Lempriere Avenue, East St Kilda, is similar in scale and housing type, but several of its houses have been altered. The very large Reid estate, Balwyn, contains a mixture of houses of comparable size and more substantial houses, but lacks the overall sense of unity and integrity of The Highway. The Golf Links Estate, Camberwell, is similar in its integrity, but is also a much larger estate with differing characteristics in terms of layout and street features.

In summary, the Coolgardie Avenue area is a fine and representative example of a mature interwar garden estate. It retains a relatively high proportion of its early housing stock, albeit with some alterations to individual houses, and through the use of a range of devices typical of the interwar era, such as the regular rhythm of detached villas, the bend in the street, the use of concrete roads, and the incorporation of substantial street trees, establishes a strong interwar character which remains largely intact. It stands out in the broader realm of East Malvern as a distinctive and valued precinct, and compares well in integrity, character and significance with a small number of contemporary subdivisions across the greater metropolitan area.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Coolgardie area is of regional significance as a fine and substantially intact example of an interwar estate subdivision, and for the quality and consistency of its housing stock. The land upon which the subdivision is set has historical significance due to its association with notable local identities, Robert Benson and William Woodmason, its former owners and, in the case of the latter, developer. The triangle of development was one of the last areas in East Malvern to be developed prior to the Depression, with quality brick family homes, mainly built by local builders. The substantial mature street trees and front gardens and the use of concrete as the major road surface are also of note, and are key contributory elements with respect to the areas distinctive interwar character.

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Woodmason, family history file, Malvern Archives.

APPENDIX 1

SCHEDULE OF BUILDINGS, DESCRIPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED GRADINGS

ALBERT STREET

Street No.	Grading	
West Side		
1	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1A	В	Single storey interwar villa.
3	В	Double storey interwar bungalow with visible additions.
5	В	Interwar bungalow with visible attic storey additions.
9	В	Double storey interwar bungalow with visible first floor additions.
11	В	Double storey interwar bungalow with visible first floor additions.
13	В	Single storey interwar villa.
15	В	Single storey interwar villa.
Olive Street		
17	В	Single storey interwar villa.
19	В	Double storey interwar bungalow.
21	В	Single storey interwar bungalow.
23	В	Interwar bungalow with attic storey.
25	В	Single storey interwar villa.
27	В	Single storey interwar bungalow.
29	В	Interwar bungalow with visible attic storey additions.
31	В	Single storey interwar bungalow.
33	В	Interwar bungalow with attic storey.
35	В	Single storey interwar villa.
37	В	Interwar bungalow with attic storey.
39	В	single storey interwar villa.
41	В	Interwar bungalow with attic storey.
43	В	Single storey interwar villa.

ALBERT STREET

Street No.	Grading	
East Side		
2	В	Single storey interwar villa.
4	В	Double storey villa with visible additions. c. 1960
6	В	Single storey interwar villa.
8	В	Single storey interwar villa.
10	В	Double storey interwar villa.
12	В	Single storey interwar bungalow.
14	В	Single storey interwar villa.
16	В	Interwar villa with attic storey.
18	В	Single storey interwar villa.
20	В	Single storey interwar villa.
22	В	Single storey interwar villa.
24	В	Double storey interwar villa with visible additions.
26 .	В	Single storey interwar villa.
28	В	Single storey interwar villa
30	В	Double storey interwar villa with visible additions.
32	В	Single storey interwar villa.
34	В	Double storey interwar bungalow with visible additions.
36	В	Single storey interwar villa.
38	В	Double storey interwar bungalow with visible additions.
40	В	Single storey interwar bungalow.

COOLGARDIE AVENUE

Street No.	Grading	
North Side		
1	В	Single storey interwar villa.
3	В	Single storey interwar villa.
5	В	Single storey interwar villa.
7	В	Single storey interwar bungalow.
9	В	Single storey interwar villa.
11	В	Single storey interwar villa.
13	В	Single storey interwar villa.
15	В	Single storey interwar villa.
17	В	Interwar villa with attic storey.
21	В	Single storey interwar villa.
23	В	Single storey interwar villa.
25	В	Single storey interwar bungalow.
South Side	:	
2	В	Single storey interwar villa.
4	В	Single storey interwar villa.
6	С	Single storey villa. c. 1970.
8	В	Double storey interwar villa.
. 10	В	Single storey interwar villa.
12 .	В	Single storey interwar villa.
14	В	Single storey interwar villa.
16	В	Single storey interwar villa.
18	В	Single storey interwar villa.
20	В	Single storey interwar villa.
22	В	Double storey interwar villa with visible additions.

MALVERN ROAD

Street No. G	rading	
West Side		
1908	В	Single storey interwar villa.
Albert Street		
1912	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1916	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1920/1924	В	Pair of single storey interwar villas. Semi detached.
1928	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1932	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1936	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1940	В	Single storey interwar villa.
Coolgardie Avenu	ie	
1944	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1946	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1948	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1950	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1952	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1954	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1956	В	Double storey interwar villa with visible additions.
1958	В	Single storey interwar villa.
Melrose Avenue		•
1960	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1962	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1964	В	Single storey interwar villa.
1970	В	Single storey interwar shop.
1976/1978	В	Single storey interwar pair. Semi detached.
1980/1982	В	Single storey interwar pair. Semi detached.
1984	В	Single storey villa. c. 1955.

MALVERN ROAD

Street No.	Grading			
West Side (continued)				
1988/1990	В	Single storey interwar pair. Semi detached.		
1992	В	Nerrigundah. Single storey interwar villa.		
2004	В	Single storey interwar shop.		
MELROSE	MELROSE AVENUE			
Street No.	Grading			
South Side				
2A	В	Double storey villa with visible additions. c.1970.		
2/4	В	Single storey interwar pair. Semi detached.		
6/8	В	Single storey interwar pair. Semi detached.		
10/12	В	Single storey interwar units. Semi detached.		
North Side				
3	В	Double storey interwar villa with visible first floor additions.		
5	В	Single storey interwar villa.		
7	В	Interwar villa with attic storey.		
9	В	Double storey interwar villa with visible first floor additions.		
11	В	Single storey interwar villa.		
13	В	Single storey interwar villa with visible first floor additions.		

WAVERLEY ROAD

Street No.	Grading	
North Side		
Albert Street		
361	В	Double storey interwar villa with visible additions.
363	В	Single storey interwar villa.
365	В	Single storey interwar villa.
367	В	Single storey interwar villa.
369	В	Single storey interwar villa.
Coolgardie Av	enue	
371	В	Interwar bungalow with attic storey.
373	В	Single storey interwar villa.
375	В	Single storey interwar villa.
377	В	Single storey interwar villa.
379	В	Single storey interwar villa.
Melrose Aven	ue	
381	В	Single storey interwar villa.
383	В	Double storey villa. c. 1990
385/387	В	Single storey interwar pair. Semi-detached.
397/399	В	Single storey interwar pair. Semi-detached.
401	В	Double storey interwar shop.
403	В	Single storey shop. c. 1970.
405/407	В	Pair of double storey interwar shops. Semi detached.
409	В	Double storey interwar shop.
411	В	Double storey interwar shop.
413-415	В	Pair of single storey interwar shops.
417	В	Single storey shop. c. 1970.
		- -

STONNINGTON PLANNING SCHEME

LOCAL SECTION

AMENDMENT L39



SCALE 1:5000

REFER PLANNING SCHEME MAP NO. 9UC

LEGEND:

UC1

URBAN CONSERVATION AREA

Coolgadie Ace

This Map forms part of Amendment L39 exhibited on 21 May 1998.