

Como Urban Conservation Area [Area 5:1]

Extent

The Como Urban Conservation Area comprises the Como property, Lechlade Avenue and Fulham Avenue, including the south-east corner of Como Avenue and Lechlade Avenue.

History

The history of this precinct goes back to the earliest years in the development of the City of Prahran with the sale in 1840 of six large allotments stretching back from the Yarra River to Toorak Road. The boundaries of this precinct were Chapel Street on the west and Williams Road on the east.⁵⁶ These Toorak lots had been surveyed as early as 1837.⁵⁷ Gentlemen's residences in extensive garden settings with coachhouse, stables and outbuildings were constructed on these elevated sites looking across the river. They included the four historic properties: Tivoli, Little Rockley, Bona Vista and Como.⁵⁸ The historic Como property was located on two allotments, which included the lagoon adjacent to the river.

Although the subdivision of the Bona Vista and Tivoli estates began in the 1880s⁵⁹, the Como Estate remained intact into the 1890s⁶⁰ and until the first decade of this century. In c1910, the southern part of the Como Estate was subdivided. The subdivision plan proposed housing sites on the west side of Williams Road and on the east side of Como Avenue, even further reducing the size of the Como property. These allotments did not proceed.⁶¹ The old mansion (added to in the 1850s and 1880s) remained, but it lost its address, entrance gates (now relocated) and gate lodge.⁶² New streets - Fulham Avenue, Lechlade Avenue and Como Avenue - were created in which fine houses on elevated sites with wide blocks of land were built.⁶³ The construction of Alexandra Avenue and Como Park in the 1920s saw the end of the Como Lagoon. Como Park was created on land north of the old mansion purchased by Prahran Council.⁶⁴

Today, the historic Como homestead (now owned by the National Trust) remains on the largest early mansion allotment in the City of Prahran. It is surrounded now by buildings in Fulham Avenue, Como Avenue, Lechlade Avenue and Williams Road south of Lechlade Avenue, which date from the time of the c1910 subdivision to the Second World War period.⁶⁵

56. George Tibbits, *History of Prahran*. pp. 25 & 26.

57. George Tibbits, p.26.

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

59. Betty Malone, *From Como House to Como City*, pp. 4, 8.

60. MMBW 1895 drainage plan

61. S. Wilde, *The History of Prahran*, p. 63.

62. Nigel Lewis & Associates, *Prahran Character and Conservation Study 1992*, p.25.

63. Betty Malone, *From Como House to Como City*, p.14.

64. Betty Malone, *From Como House to Como City*, p. 15

65. Nigel Lewis & Associates, *Prahran Character and Conservation Study 1992*, p.26

Description

The precinct centres on and looks to Como. Lechlade Avenue is bounded on the north by Como and its character is created a combination of the garden plantings and structures within the Como grounds, combined with the housing opposite.

In Fulham Street, a series of detached villas, largely dating from c1910 line both sides of the street. Each has distinctive design qualities and is individual in its styling. Shared characteristics are the size of each building and its relative closeness to the street frontage. While medium to high front fences dominate, most houses are clearly visible from the street and contribute to its overall character.

The street works comprise a wide asphalt roadway bordered by bluestone kerb and gutters, narrow grassy nature strips and a concrete footpath. Small Prunus trees line Fulham Avenue. Larger trees from adjoining gardens provide the main planted character.

Heritage characteristics

The key heritage characteristics of the Como Urban Conservation Area are:

- Como and views into that property from the adjoining streets
- the predominantly Edwardian and inter-war character created by the housing developments that occurred subsequent to the subdivision of Como
- the street pattern and the continuity of the use of bluestone and asphalt
- the entry created at Fulham Avenue by the two storey inter-war houses on each corner.

Analysis

The defined Urban Conservation Area largely encapsulates the area of significance. However, an extension to include the northern part of Como Avenue to the southern boundary of no. 9 and the equivalent property on the eastern side of the street would be warranted to more fully represent Como, the subdivision of its estate (see Wilde p. 63) and the development arising from that subdivision.

Significance

The Como Urban Conservation Area has significance as the site of the historic Como property set within the Edwardian and inter-war housing estates that resulted from its subdivision. The Area illustrates the historical development pattern resulting from the subdivision of the early properties fronting the Yarra River, and unlike other similar localities retains the historic Como mansion on the largest early mansion allotment remaining in the City of Prahran.

Sources

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

Nigel Lewis & Associates, *Prahran Character and Conservation Study 1992*, p.25, 26.

Malone, Betty, *'From Como House to Como City'*, pp. 4, 8, 14, 15.

MMBW 1895 drainage plan.

Tibbits, George, *History of Prahran*, pp. 25-26.

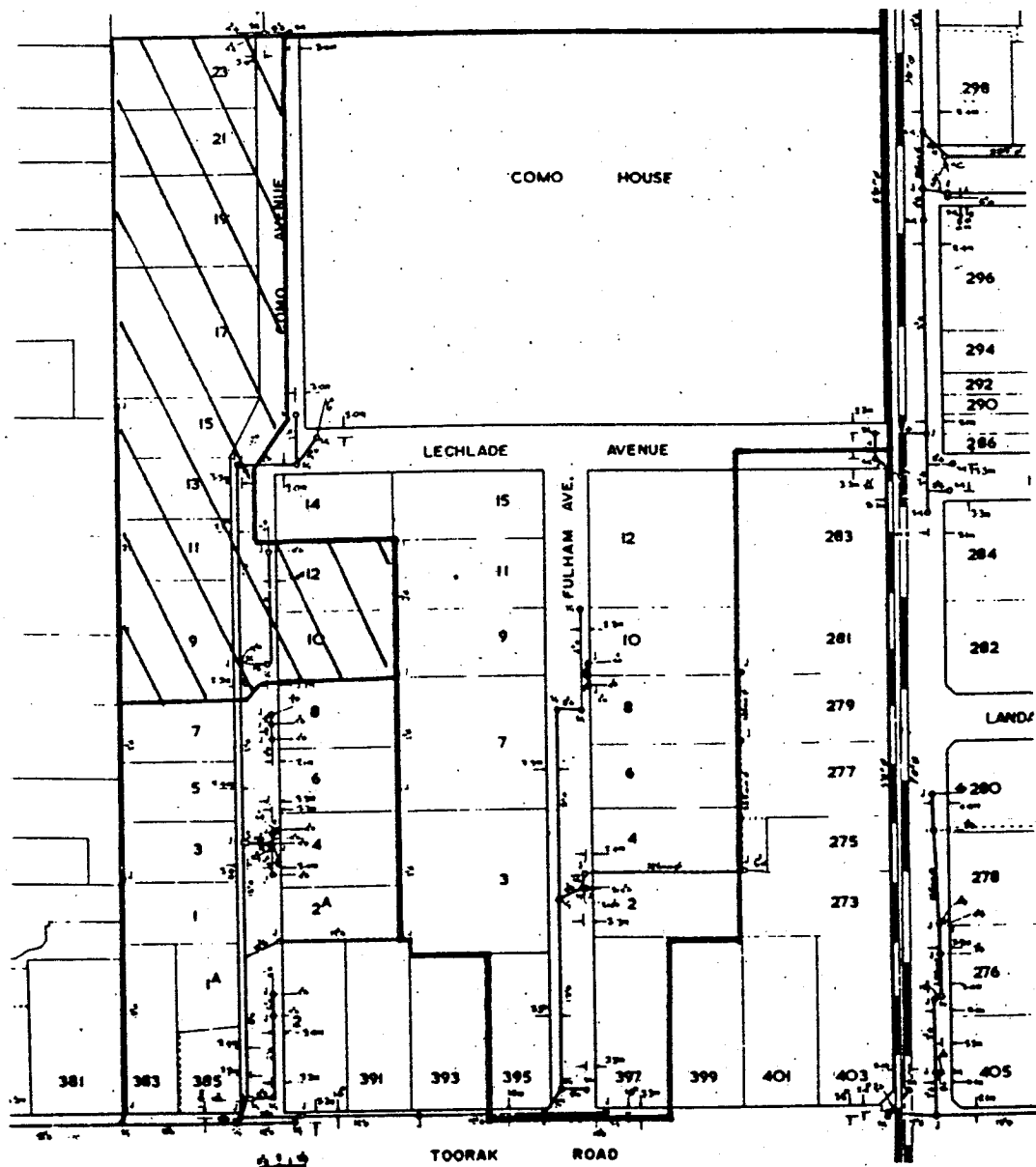
Wilde, S. *The History of Prahran 1925-1990*, 1993. Subdivision plan of Como Estate.

Recommendations

1. Adopt the UC1 Area as exhibited
2. Seek an extension to the Area to include the northern part of Como Avenue to the southern boundary of no. 9 and the equivalent property on the eastern side of the street.

Map

Como Urban Conservation Area [Area 5:1]



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.