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# Munition Workers' Housing

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## Location

off Duke St BRAYBROOK, Maribyrnong City

## Municipality

MARIBYRNONG CITY

## Level of significance

-

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO5

## Heritage Listing

Vic. War Heritage Inventory

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Munition Workers' Housing precinct is significant to Victoria because: - it is part of a Federal Government-initiated housing scheme for workers in the munitions industry in the Maribyrnong-Footscray area, then the largest concentration of defence production establishments in Australia, when World War Two began, as exemplified by the high integrity of the estate with its uniformity of house design, siting, lot layout, early landscape and concrete road construction ( Criterion A4, B2) .

- it was among the first major Commonwealth war housing schemes to be undertaken and was one of the few large-scale housing schemes undertaken in Victoria during World War Two ( Criterion B2); and - it is a good exemplar of contemporary mass house planning and estate layout principles, as indicated by the provision of parklands, curvilinear street patterns, street trees and culde- sacs ( Criterion F1).

Heritage Study/Consultant	Maribyrnong - Maribyrnong Heritage Review, Jill Barnard, Graeme Butler, Francine Gilfedder & Gary Vines, 2000; Maribyrnong - City of Footscray Urban Conservation Study, Graeme Butler, 1989;
Construction dates	1942,
Other Names	Commonwealth Housing,
Hermes Number	125577
Property Number	

## Physical Description 1

This estate extends across Duke St, from Sunshine (City of Brimbank) into Braybrook (City of Maribyrnong). The estate is characterised in plan by the curving street forms, cul-de-sacs and the provision of integrated parkland. The 1945 aerial photograph shows the estate development clearly, with large vacant grassed areas surrounding a regularly and distinctively planned housing group. The aerial view shows the estate commencing on the east at Yewers St and including the relatively large internal park enclosed by Lowe Cr, Nixon and Baker streets. The housing extended south along Correy and Duke Streets and crossed over into Braybrook in an area bordered on the south by Myalla St, on the east by Dobson and part of Ravenhall and on the north by Lily St. Within these loose boundaries is a series of cul-de-sacs or courts which include Treloar, Dobson, Dedrick and Watson.

On the ground, the houses typically are single storey, have hipped or gabled and Marseilles pattern terracotta tiled roofs, red or clinker brick walls, timber framed windows (some replaced with aluminium) and a duplex or paired configuration. There are some concrete houses in the estate but these are mainly in Sunshine and can be distinguished from the Housing Commission of Victoria housing of the 1950s and onwards, which surround the estate, by their detached form, thicker wall construction and smaller windows (eg. 11 Baker St). Related planting includes Italian cypress and privet in gardens and ash street trees while kerb and channel is concrete with grassed

medians, some concrete road paving. Concrete road paving is rare in the metropolitan area and is often associated with sustenance labour schemes initiated by local councils.

Contributory streets and sites in the City of Maribyrnong include (using City base plan house numbers- see following plan): Myalla St, 1-27 duplexes (HCV concrete 36-32)

Duke St east side 70 -124 (contributory houses 74-76, 78-80, 82-4)

Dobson Cr 1-25;

Ravenhall St. 2-18 no concrete road

Lily St south side 67-57 (HCV nearby);

Devonshire Rd 140-148, 155, 157;

Treloar Crescent & Cr. 1-29, 2-46 (1-6 all duplexes), concrete road

Dedrick Gr. 1-19, all duplexes concrete road (10 is new two storey dual occupancy); and

Watson Gr. 1-5- west side only, east is reserve, concrete road.

The Sunshine section of the estate has a higher integrity and is generally in better condition. The internal park and mature street trees lend more diversity to representation of the development period and a higher amenity but it is likely that these were developed over a number of years. There are more concrete houses than in the Braybrook section.

The following description comes from the City of Brimbank heritage study: `...an estate of concrete houses and brick semi-detached houses built by the Commonwealth to house munitions workers, a total of 234 houses. The development extends across Duke Street with a substantial number of houses in Braybrook, now the City of Maribyrnong (58%). The Brimbank precinct (98 houses) comprises houses in Baker Street, Nixon Street, Yewers Street, Cobrey Street, Duke Street, Devonshire Road and around Lowe Crescent. A characteristic of the area is

the concrete roads and the curving Lowe Crescent on a small irregular shaped square with landscaping of contemporary date and also later periods. The houses themselves are generally hipped roof with overhanging eaves. The Nixon Street, Baker Street, Yewers Street and Lowe Crescent houses are concrete-walled, while the others are generally red brick, with a series of long duplexes in Duke Street and Cobrey Street. The larger part of this same development occurs across Duke Street in the City of Maribyrnong' {COB}.

## Physical Conditions

good (partially disturbed, well preserved) - retaining much of the original character of the area due to the retention of original fence, concrete roads and planting.

## Integrity

substantially intact/some intrusions

## Physical Description 2

The estate is surrounded by largely post WW2 housing both private and government.

## Historical Australian Themes

### Thematic context

**Local Theme(s):** Government -provided housing

**PAHT Subtheme:** Making suburbs

**Australian Principal Theme:** Making suburbs

## Physical Description 3

**Map (Melway)** 27B12, 41A1

**Boundary description** Duke St on the west, Myalla St on the south, Dobson and part of Ravenhall on the east and on the north by Lily St. Within these boundaries is a series of cul-de-sacs or courts which include Treloar, Dobson, Dedrick and Watson.

**Heritage Significance:** State

**Creation date(s):** 1942

**Local Government Area:** City of Maribyrnong

**Ownership Type:** Private & Public

## Veterans Description for Public

In 1942, the Commonwealth Government built housing for munition workers. The estate was built to house workers employed in the munitions industry in the Maribyrnong-Footscray area, the largest concentration of defence production establishments in the whole of Australia. The munitions industry had been established in the Footscray-Maribyrnong area from the late nineteenth century with the Colonial Ammunition Factory. It expanded following Federation, and during significant periods such as the two World Wars. By the 1940s there were several thousand workers employed in the Ammunition, Explosives and Ordnance Factories, and other related industries. Particularly during the Second World War, the need for mobilising a vast civil workforce, concentrated in a small area, put extra pressures on local services, and particularly housing. In an attempt to deal with this, the Commonwealth Government purchased land just outside of Footscray for housing for munitions workers. Altogether 235 houses were constructed, of which 42% (or 98 houses) are on the Brimbank side of Duke Street. The design of the estate was in part contributed to by Melbourne University architecture students.

*This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.*

*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*