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## 31 Bennett St



RICHMOND BENNETT  
STREET 31.jpg

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### Location

31 BENNETT STREET, RICHMOND VIC 3121 - Property No 151940

### Municipality

YARRA CITY

### Level of significance

Rec for HO area contributory

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

### Heritage Listing

Yarra City

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Precinct statement of significance:

What is significant?

Historical background

In 1839, two years after the first land sales in the township reserve of Melbourne, Crown allotments were auctioned in Richmond, Fitzroy and Collingwood. These allotments were mainly intended for development as

farmlets. However many of the purchases in Richmond were speculative for, very soon, allotments were subdivided and advertised for sale in the "Port Phillip Patriot". The first was William Wilton's Crown allotment 46 which was to be sold in one or more acre lots. In 1840, at a subdivision sale of Dr. Farquhar McCrae's allotment 24, the auctioneer described Richmond as ".the abode of aristocracy, wealthy and retired opulence." and 36 half acre blocks were sold.

This was the boom period leading up to the recession of the early 1840s. As a sign of the times, subdivisions on the Richmond flats were advertised in 1842 as ".well deserving public attention among the working class", in contrast to earlier advertising of the higher parts of Richmond as for gentlemen only.

By the mid 1840s the depression had ended and resumption of the Immigration Act resulted in a new influx of workers. The sale of Crown allotments recommenced in Richmond in 1845 and by 1851 a further fifteen Crown Portions were sold. Reserves were also created for police purposes (Crown allotments 13-15), and for churches, recreation, produce market, schools and a mechanics' institute (Crown allotment 35). Thirty-one quarry sites were set aside on Crown allotments 9 to 15 where they abutted the river. The only other clay pits shown are at the locality of Yarraberg which David Mitchell operated in Crown Portion 42, off Burnley St.

Richmond's population in 1846 was 4029. At this time, Fitzroy and Collingwood were also being rapidly subdivided, St. Kilda and Port Melbourne were fashionable picnic spots and Williamstown a busy port. The village at Brighton was the leading pleasure resort, and Heidelberg a prosperous farming community. East Melbourne was little built upon until after 1848 when Bishop Perry chose a site there for the Anglican Bishop's Palace. This gave an impetus to building and the Richmond area went ahead as a select and convenient one in which to live. In 1852 North Melbourne, St. Kilda, South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, Essendon, Remington, Carlton and Hawthorn were laid out.

Melbourne's population had trebled by 1853 with people returning from the goldfields, while in Richmond major residential subdivisions had occurred in the north and west. Within the next four years, men who established their suburban villas on the Richmond hills included senior Government officials, Alexander McCrae and William Hull; newspaper proprietors Thomas Strode, George Cavanaugh and George Arden; merchants Patrick Welsh, David Stodart Campbell and Alfred Woolley; and the bankers William Highett and John Gardiner. Their ".comfortable, if not architecturally stylish villas began to dot the place".

Richmond was created a separate municipality in 1855. The survey maps of Magee and Kearney show that at this time many of the existing major streets had been laid out but that almost all buildings, with the exception of those in the Yarraberg area to the northeast, were concentrated in the western half of Richmond, near to Melbourne town and the railway route: large suburban villas and gardens on the hill, and cottages on small blocks in the north and south, often in areas of relatively intense development isolated to individual streets. The factors influencing the location of the earliest development appear to have been a preference for high ground and a position on government roads, especially at cross roads.

Richmond's population in 1857 was 9,029 with 2,161 houses and five architects. The electors' roll for 1856-7 indicates an established retail and service trade in Swan Street and Bridge Road - butchers, drapers, shoemakers, hotels, fruiterers, tailors, hairdressers, grocers and blacksmiths.

With separation from Melbourne in 1855, Richmond, along with Collingwood, became exempt from the "Melbourne Building Act" of 1849 which controlled building and subdivision standards. Developers were free to plan streets, reduce frontages and build what they liked. Closer development of Richmond was also encouraged by the railway which was extended to Brighton from Melbourne by 1859, and by horse drawn omnibuses which connected Richmond with Melbourne along Bridge Road.

Melbourne's population in 1861 was 37,000 (including Carlton and East Melbourne); Richmond, Collingwood and Fitzroy each had about 12,000, Prahran 10,000, South Melbourne 9,000, North Melbourne 7,000 and St. Kilda 6,000. Development was apparent along Punt Road c.1860, with little development in south-east Richmond was in 1869. Unemployment was a major issue during the 1860s and in 1862 the Richmond Council sought the repeal of the "Yarra Pollution Prevention Act" of 1855 (which forbade fellmongeries, starch and glue factories, and boiling down works discharging waste into the Yarra River upstream from Melbourne) so that the river frontages could be opened to manufacturing. By 1865 a quarry, stone crushing mill, fellmongery and abattoir had been established on the river flats in Burnley, and by the 1870's a panoramic view of Richmond carried the caption 'Industry in Arcady'.

As with Melbourne and its other suburbs, the most active period of development in Richmond was in the 1870s and 1880s. The eastern half of the town was partly subdivided by 1874 and by 1888 most subdivision patterns were complete, the major exception being Cole's paddock on Victoria Street. Richmond was proclaimed a town in 1872 and a city in 1882. Its population in 1880 was 23,395 and in 1890 it was 38,797. The residential development trend was a marked increase from the 1850s, steeply rising until c1881 and then a plateau into the 1890s Great Depression. The rate books list 52 industrial establishments in 1880.

Houses constructed between Federation and World War One make up a substantial proportion of Richmond's building stock particularly in the eastern half of the city. Cole's paddock was subdivided by this time.

Encouraged by high tariff protection, new factories and stores were also being established, most notably Bryant & May, Wertheim's piano factory, Dimmey's Model Store, Ruwolt, Rosella, Moore Paragon and Mayall's tannery. By 1919 there were nine tanneries.

This industrial expansion continued after World War One when small gaps in the urban development were filled by inter-war housing estate and Wren's race course was changed to public housing. The Second War was the end of the first wave of urban development in Richmond and hence forms a perceptible period in the historic environment that is the basis for proposed heritage precincts in Richmond, Cremorne and Burnley.

### Specific history

This Heritage Precinct arose from the development of Crown Portion 44, first sold in 1849 to John Robert Murphy who was also responsible for the gradual development of the Cremorne and Richmond South area (Crown Portions 5, 7&8). Murphy was also a well known Colonial brewer whose business was in Melbourne and residence in Street Kilda Rd. The Richmond working class residents would favour Murphy's beer while occupying his many developments in the City.

Shown as vegetation on the 1855 plan of this area, Coles Paddock was linked with Thomas Cole's famous Richmond Nursery located further east along Victoria Street on the Yarra, at the site of the later IKEA development.

In 1847 Thomas purchased land with a Yarra River frontage at Burnley where he established an orchard and nursery. According to E. E. Pescott, Cole issued his first catalogue from the Richmond Nursery in 1850, making it one of the earliest produced in Victoria. He took a keen interest in the horticultural progress of the colony and was a prime mover behind the establishment of the Horticultural Society of Victoria's experimental garden at Burnley.

.He drew on his long horticultural experience-then unparalleled among fellow colonists-in his book Cole's Gardening in Victoria (1860). Besides monthly notes on the kitchen, fruit and flower garden, Cole included authoritative remarks 'On Selecting Fruit Trees', and much of interest regarding garden design. He recognized the futility of large expanses of lawn in oppressive Australian summers but was generally little concerned with questions of garden styles. He was careful and cautious, even conservative, in outlook and in the pages of the Yeoman and Australian Acclimatiser he clashed during 1863 with the progressive agriculturist Josiah Mitchell over the question of exhaustion of soils.

In 1862 Cole leased the Richmond Nursery to his son John Charles (1838-1891), who specialized in fruit trees and vines and supplemented the rapidly urbanized site in the mid-1880s with a generous land selection at Fern Tree Gully (Belgrave), which he named Glen Harrow. Another of Thomas's sons, Rev. Thomas Cornelius junior (1836-1879), was also active in Melbourne horticultural circles. . (Australian Dictionary of Biography)

Coles Paddock was marked as a large vacant area on the MMBW Detail Plan in the late 1890s with a single row of 6 houses fronting a circle off Victoria Street called Cole's Terrace (between Leslie and Davison Streets). Lawyers, Malleson & Company lodged a plan of subdivision for the paddock in 1907 as declared by George Kelly. The estate (Lodged Plan 4842), with Leslie and Davison as the two north-south streets, contained some 71 house lots, each typically 66 feet wide with depths varying from 120 to 140 feet. Many of the lots facing Burnley Street have since been consolidated to form, larger development tracts while those facing Victoria Street were divided and consolidated for commercial use. Bennett Street was formed as Lodged Plan 5419, with 38 house lots of 44-40 feet frontage and commercial lots onto Victoria Street of 23-33 feet, as approved for lodgement in 1911. JN Kelly of Fitzroy Street, St. Kilda was the surveyor.

A land sale handbill from January 1911 promoted some 44 Building Allotments in Bennett Street, as part of 'that fine block of land known as Cole's Paddock', suitable for shops (in Victoria Street), villas and cottages. It was also

close to the Victoria Street tramway terminus at the Yarra River and had the following unparalleled attributes:

It is the only unsubdivided land in Richmond

It is within 2 miles of the G.P.O.

it is right on the Victoria Street Cable Tram running into Collins Street.

It is close to the shops in Smith Street

It is the centre of a Large Population, and must increase in value.

As a result of this subdivision, the houses built on the paddock are largely from the Edwardian-era with some inter-war. Among these are some individually significant Edwardian-era residences with picturesque roof forms and distinctive verandah detail. Davison Street has the best groupings from this era but as with other streets, there are large unrelated flat blocks from the 1960s onwards, interspersed.

For estate agents, the Coles Paddock estate was an evolution from the long running Heart of Richmond Estate, a catch-phrase used in land sales from the 1850s, and land here was sold in the 1920s as both the Heart and Coles Paddock by agents Coghill & Haughton:

THIS SATURDAY, MARCH 10.

At Three O'clock. in a Marquee. On the Land,

HEART OF RICHMOND ESTATE,

Corner of VICTORIA and JOHNSON STREETS. RICHMOND.

60 VILLA ALLOTMENTS. 60.

THE SUBDIVISION OF COLE'S Paddock.

Only 2.1/2 Miles from the G.P.O.

Foresight Has Been Displayed in the Lay-out of This Estate, the Surveyors Bearing in

Mind That INVESTORS Will Erect Villas in Pairs for Letting Purposes, and the Requirement of

the HOME BUILDERS Has Not Been Overlooked

Made Road Frontages, Water, Gas. Electricity Light, and Sewer Main» Available

The Estate is Being Offered on Behalf of the Original Owners.

E-A-S-Y T-E-R-M-S. £5 DEPOSIT, 20/- MONTHLY.

Interest 6 Per Cent., Payable Quarterly. Residue in 5 Years.

By the First War, Richmond's population had peaked after a long steady rise from the 1840s: this precinct represents part of this final surge of development.

The Coles Paddock Estate, Richmond heritage precinct is largely comprised of detached weatherboard or red brick clad Edwardian-era and inter-war houses set out on three main north-south streets: Bennett, Leslie and Davison. The estate also includes house and shop lots in Victoria Street. Among these detached houses are some Edwardian-era house rows or pairs. Typically houses are designed in the Federation (see 1 Davison Street) or Californian Bungalow styles, with some houses showing the transition between the two styles (see 48 Bennett Street). Gomer Terrace is one example of a Victorian-era house row in the precinct close to Buckingham Street and just outside of the Cole's Paddock Estate's southern border but complementary to its character.

Typically, the streets have rear right-of-ways that provide access to privies located at the rear of each block despite the Edwardian-era origin of the development, after the connection of the MMBW sewer to the area in the 1890s. Among these houses is recent unrelated development, such as flat blocks, but these have been largely

excluded from the Heritage Precinct.

The area is one of the largest Edwardian-era house groups in the former City of Richmond.

### Key sites

Key buildings in the area include the Edwardian-era houses at 36 Bennett Street (a well composed design with distinctive timber decoration including gable strapping, verandah fretwork and posts) and 8 Leslie Street, with their distinctive verandah form, including the uncommon crown verandah; 1 Davison Street with its distinctive verandah detailing (part of a significant Edwardian-era group, with similar timber verandah fretwork); 35 Davison Street with significant verandah and eaves details; and the large brick house at 16 Leslie Street with its twin gabled wings. The public infrastructure is typical of the Edwardian-era, such as stone pitched lane paving, stone kerbs and channels, and asphalt paved footpaths.

### Main development period

The main development period evident in the heritage overlay is that of the Edwardian-era, with a contribution from well preserved inter-war buildings and individually significant places of all eras.

### Contributory elements

Contributory elements include (but not exclusively) mainly Edwardian-era houses, with a contribution from well preserved residential examples from the immediate post First-War era, having typically:

- . pitched gabled and hipped roofs;
- . detached siting but some attached;
- . one storey with some two wall heights,
- . painted weatherboard and red brick walls;
- . corrugated iron and unglazed Marseilles pattern terra-cotta tile roofing;
- . chimneys of matching face brickwork with corbelled capping courses;
- . post-supported verandah or porch elements addressing the street; and
- . less than 40% of the street wall face comprised with openings such as windows and doors.

Contributory elements also include:

- . Small front gardens, bordered by low front fences, typically of timber picket or wire fabric (inter-war); and
- . Public infrastructure, expressive of the Edwardian-era, such as stone pitched road paving, kerbs and channels, and asphalt paved footpaths.

### How is it significant?

Cole's Paddock Estate, Richmond Heritage Precinct is aesthetically and historically significant (National Estate Register Criteria E1, A4) to the locality of Richmond and the City of Yarra.

### Why is it significant?

Cole's Paddock Estate, Richmond Heritage Precinct is significant to the City of Yarra and Richmond as:

- . A relatively homogenous Edwardian-era house group that expresses the growth in the City of Richmond that accompanied new industrial development across the Colony after Federation;
- . As an expression of the long-lived Coles Paddock area that remained free of construction over a long period because of its use in combination with Thomas Cole's important Richmond nursery; and
- . For the groups of individually significant Edwardian-era residences with picturesque roof forms and distinctive verandah details.

Heritage Study/Consultant Yarra - Heritage Gap Study, Graeme Butler & Associates, 2007;

Hermes Number 166442

Property Number

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*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/>*