
Griffin Estate and Environs Precinct



GRIFFIN ESTATE &
ENVIRONS map

Location

126-144 Canterbury Road and 5-51 Chaucer Street and 2-28 Chaucer Street and 2-44 Dudley Parade and 4-6 Keats Street and 4-12 Marlowe Street and 9-25 Myrtle Road CANTERBURY, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO700

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 19, 2018

What is Significant?

Griffin Estate & Environs Precinct, comprising residential properties at 126-144 Canterbury Road, 5-51 & 2-28 Chaucer Crescent, 2-44 Dudley Parade, 4-6 Keats Street, 4-12 Marlowe Street and 9-25 Myrtle Road, Canterbury, is significant. Griffin Estate was originally subdivided in 1885, but less than half of the blocks sold at that time. The central section, along the south side of Chaucer Crescent and the east/north side of Myrtle Road and Dudley Parade, was marketed for a second time in 1904, marking the beginning of a rapid period of residential development. Original street names honoured English poets: (Geoffrey) Chaucer Crescent, (Christopher) Marlowe Street, and (Edmund) Spencer Crescent (now Myrtle Road).

To the east of Marlowe Street, the precinct extends into part of the Logan Estate, which was subdivided in 1893, then readvertised for sale around 1907. The naming convention of the Griffin Estate was extended into this new area, with the continuation of Chaucer Crescent, and Keats Street (named after Romantic poet John Keats).

There was limited development in the precinct prior to 1901, with a small cluster of houses on Chaucer Crescent. The majority of the houses were constructed during the Edwardian period, between 1906 and 1918, leaving a handful of lots to be developed during the interwar period and just after World War II.

The following properties are Significant to the precinct: 136 Canterbury Road (HO375), 138 Canterbury Road (HO376), 140 Canterbury Road, and 24 Chaucer Crescent (HO380). The following properties are Non-contributory to the precinct: 6, 7, 13, 15-15A, 16-16A, 17, 18, 27, 29 & 31 Chaucer Crescent; 12 Dudley Parade; 6 Keats Street; 4-4A, 8, 10 & 12 Marlowe Street; and 11 Myrtle Road. The remaining properties are Contributory to the precinct.

How is it significant?

Griffin Estate & Environs Precinct is of local historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

Griffin Estate & Environs Precinct is of historical significance for its demonstration of the early suburban development of Canterbury. The opening of Canterbury Railway Station in 1882 spurred the creation of suburban estates from 1885, Griffin Estate being one of the earliest. It was followed by Logan Estate in 1893, on the east side of Marlowe Street. A number of these early houses, built in the late 1880s, survive along Chaucer Crescent. Like Canterbury more generally, the major phase of development in the precinct was the Edwardian period, with the final infill of streetscapes in the interwar period and just following World War II, illustrating the pattern of development characteristic of the suburb. (Criterion A)

The Griffin Estate & Environs Precinct is of architectural significance for demonstrating the principal characteristics of early suburban housing in Canterbury. There was little nineteenth-century development in the locality, so the small group of houses built between 1888 and 1901 are significant for illustrating the characteristic features of the Italianate style. All have the low M-profile hipped roof, bracketed eaves, corniced chimney and verandah set below the eaves with cast-iron detail. All but one are of facebrick (enlivened with polychromy or cement-render detail), and have an asymmetrical facade (with a canted or gabled projecting bay).

The precinct is particularly rich in Edwardian-era architecture, built between 1903 and 1915, ranging from smaller middle-class dwellings to substantial residences. Most are Federation Queen Anne in style, and have diagonal emphasis, expressed in the verandah form or by the presence of a corner bay window or entrance. The pyramidal or gabled-hipped roofs are clad in terracotta tiles, slate or corrugated iron (this last one more common for timber houses). Features include projecting gabled bays, bay windows, hoods over windows, red brick chimneys with decorative details such as corbelling, strapwork, roughcast or terracotta chimney pots, and sash or casement windows often with decorative highlight windows. A variant of this type has a generally symmetrical facade, with two projecting bays around a central porch, often supported on Tuscan-order columns. (Criterion D)

The Griffin Estate & Environs Precinct is of aesthetic significance thanks to its picturesque streetscapes of fine suburban houses, many of them architect designed. Appreciation of the dwellings, individually and as a group, is enhanced by the curved plan of Chaucer Crescent and Myrtle Road/Dudley Parade, the elevated siting of houses on the north sides of these streets, the consistent garden setbacks, and the presence of mature street trees (alternating Plane trees and Melaleucas along Chaucer Crescent). (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study: Vol. 1 Canterbury, Context, 2018;
Construction dates	1888,
Hermes Number	202105
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The Griffin Estate & Environs Precinct is situated just east of Boroondara Park (the path of the former Outer Circle Railway line), and bound by Canterbury Road at the north and the Lilydale Rail line at the south. The land slopes away from Canterbury Road, with the topography reflected in the curved alignments of Chaucer Crescent and Myrtle Road/Dudley Parade to the east of Marlowe Street. The sloping land also provides a slight rise to houses on the north side of Chaucer Crescent, and more dramatic elevation to houses along the north side of Myrtle Road/Dudley Parade. The houses sit behind medium-sized front gardens, and side setbacks are fairly consistent throughout the precinct. Street trees enhance the presentation of the streetscapes, with alternating mature Plane trees and Melaleucas along the Chaucer Crescent nature strips the largest and most impressive plantings. Much of the area retains bluestone street infrastructure, in the form of pitched gutters or kerbs. Footpaths are of asphalt, appropriate to the pre-interwar establishment of the subdivisions.

As discussed in the precinct history, the full residential development of the precinct can be divided into three periods: late Victorian (1888-1901), Edwardian (1903-1915), and interwar to early post-war (1918-1955). The architectural forms that represent each of these periods will be discussed below.

Late Victorian

The seven Victorian houses that survive in the precinct are almost all modest in size and fairly typical in their architectural expression. In keeping with the dominant style of the day, all can be described as Italianate in style. All but one - the most modest house at 42 Dudley Parade - have masonry walls and slate roofs. Even the Dudley Parade house is clad in timber boards that simulate the more prestigious stone ashlar. These range from fine polychromy (136 Canterbury Road) and more standard bi-chrome brickwork (19 & 21 Chaucer Crescent), to facebrick with cement dressings (9 Chaucer Crescent, 144 Canterbury Road), and rendered brick (23 Chaucer Crescent).

The modest timber house at 42 Dudley Parade is also the only example of a simple, block-fronted facade. The remaining houses are all asymmetrical in plan, with a projecting bay to one side of the facade and a verandah to the other. Half of them have a canted projecting bay below a semi-octagonal roof (136 Canterbury Road, 19 & 21 Chaucer Crescent), while the remaining three have a gabled form to the projecting bay. In keeping with the Italianate mode, the verandah roofs sit below the eaves of the house, are supported on slender Corinthian columns with cast-iron frieze and brackets, and all have a hipped roof (with an M-profile) with corniced chimneys.

Apart from the fine polychrome brickwork of 136 Canterbury Road, which is the most substantial of the Victorian houses, the two with cement render dressings have the most interesting decorative detail. 'Glenlossie', at 9 Chaucer Crescent, is highly ornamented with brackets below the chimney cornices, and alternating with cast roundels below the eaves. The roundel detail is reproduced at a much larger scale in the front gable, above a pair

of round-arched windows. There is a wide beltcourse at the springing level of the window arches, ornamented with acanthus leaves. The projecting front gable is finished with a timber bargeboard and trusswork with pierced fretwork, drawing upon a romantic, medievalising aesthetic. The slightly later house at 144 Canterbury Road, constructed as the home of builder John Allen, can be considered a simplified version of 'Glenlossie'. It also has cement quoins to corners and around the front door, and a pair of round-arched windows in the projecting gabled bay. Decorative details of note also include a scalloped detail to the eaves fascia, the raking pediment and the front verandah. The return verandah has a decorative pediment at the centre, also with a scalloped detail and tympanum with a pierced sunburst design.

The Victorian houses in the precinct have a generally high level of intactness. 'Glenlossie' has recently been re-tuckpointed, and a garage appended to the east side. The house at 23 Chaucer Crescent also has a new garage appended to one side, the roofline has been raised slightly and reclad in new slates, and the render of the facade may have been renewed (though the original ruled render survives to the west side elevation). The front verandah of 32 Dudley Parade appears to have been partially or wholly rebuilt.

Edwardian

The majority of the Contributory and Significant houses in the precinct were built in the Edwardian period, in this case, between 1903 and 1915 (with a transitional example of 1918). They are scattered around the western half of Chaucer Crescent and the eastern part of Dudley Parade, with very imposing rows along Canterbury Road, the eastern half of Chaucer Crescent (north side), and the junction of Myrtle Road and Dudley Parade (north side).

Nearly all of the Edwardian houses can be described as Federation Queen Anne. They are characterised by a complex, asymmetrical form set below a steeply pitched hipped roof (pyramidal or with gablets). In a few cases, there is a modest attic storey indicated by original dormer windows (126 & 142 Canterbury Road). There is often a strong diagonal emphasis, expressed in the verandah form or by the presence of a corner bay window or entrance. Roofs are clad in terracotta tiles, slate or corrugated iron (this last one more common for timber houses), with decorative terracotta elements including capping, finials and other decoration. Features include projecting gabled bays, bay windows, hoods over windows (sometimes with decorative bracketing), red brick chimneys with decorative details such as corbelling, strapwork, roughcast or terracotta chimney pots, and sash or casement windows often with decorative highlight windows (filled with leadlights or coloured glass). Verandahs tend to be one of two types: a verandah that is continuous with the main roof and often returns around the side, with turned timber posts and decorative timber fretwork; or smaller porches which may have a separate roof form and are supported on Tuscan-order columns. Houses with this second type of porch have more symmetrical facades, and are less common in the precinct. They include Christopher Cowper's 140 Canterbury Road, as well as 126 & 128 Canterbury Road. Also, 12 Chaucer Crescent has the same symmetrical form with two gabled bays flanking a small front porch, this one with dwarf brick piers and timber fretwork. As does the Rev. Norwood's house at 4 Keats Street, which has a wide inset porch with very simple timber fretwork, beside a projecting hipped bay.

The Edwardian houses are either of tuckpointed facebrick, often with roughcast render bands, or of timber. The timber houses are clad in a number of ways: timber weatherboards with bands of notched boards (to emulate shingles) or areas of roughcast render, or clad in boards that mimic stone ashlar. Both types usually have half-timbering in the projecting gable, with shingles an exception (see 25 Chaucer Crescent, of 1909-10).

A few notable exceptions to these two house-types are seen in the precinct.

'The Manse' at 10 Chaucer Crescent of 1903 is unusual as this timber house has a cross-gabled roof. Its facade is dominated by a very wide half-timbered gable. A skillion-roofed verandah stretches across the front facade, resting on square timber posts with very simple timber brackets. Its bold and simple massing and minimal use of ornament is in keeping with the Arts & Crafts style, brought from England and most commonly used in Australia by architects. The substantial attic-storey villa 'Heyford' at 22 Chaucer Crescent of 1907-08 is another fine example of the Arts & Crafts style (best seen in the historic image at Figure 7). It is clad in facebrick and roughcast render, and has a very steep cross-gabled roof with half-timbering to some gables and parapets to others. The entrance porch on the west side rests on full-length Tuscan order columns (this porch has been enclosed). Windows have square-pane leadlights and a variety of configurations such as box bay windows with a hipped roof, banks of flush windows, and window hoods.

The house at 21 Myrtle Road of 1909 is a simple but very elegant timber Indian Bungalow with symmetrical massing and facade. The dominant feature is the steeply pitched, terracotta tiled pyramidal roof that extends over

the encircling verandah. The verandah has Tudor-arched timber fretwork and chamfered timber posts.

A more modest exception to the typical Edwardian houses in the precinct is the only semi-detached pair of this era at 26 & 28 Dudley Parade of 1914 (there are several more from the interwar period). The dwellings have facebrick and roughcast rendered walls, a terracotta tiled roof, and are massed to suggest a single large house. The verandah of no. 28 retains fine pierced timber fretwork.

The Edwardian houses in the precinct have a generally high level of intactness. There are few intrusive extensions to these houses (exceptions are at 6 Marlow Street, and a front dormer to 26 Chaucer Crescent). The most common alteration seen is the loss (or loss and sympathetic replacement of) verandah fretwork and sometimes posts (for example at 4 & 26 Dudley Parade; 33, 37, 41 & 45, Chaucer Crescent). There is also overpainting of face brickwork (at 45 Chaucer Crescent). At 2 Dudley Parade, a new garage addition is set below the line of the existing house. While large, effort has been made to ensure that it does not interfere with views to this high-set house.

The most extensively altered Edwardian house that is still considered to contribute to the precinct is at 6 Dudley Parade. In the mid-twentieth century, the window in the front gable was enlarged and the verandah fretwork removed. In 2016 a casement window was reinstated in this bay and appropriate timber fretwork installed. Changes to cladding materials have not been so sympathetic as the notched and plain weatherboards have been rendered (or entirely replaced) and the terracotta roof tiles have been replaced with dark grey Colorbond. Also, the two original windows below the front verandah have been enlarged. Despite all of these changes, the house still presents as a Federation Queen Anne dwellings with the same massing and chimneys as other houses in the precinct.

Interwar and early post-war

As noted in the history, infill of the precinct subdivisions was completed just after the close of World War II. Stylistically, the houses can be usefully grouped into early interwar (1918-27), and late interwar plus early post-war (1933-55)

The early interwar houses all show a dominant bungalow influence, though 11 Chaucer Crescent of 1918 is a transitional example. Built at the cusp of the Edwardian and interwar eras, it is sculptural and boldly detailed, with a projecting gabled bay and canted bay window to the facade, along with a timber ladder-back frieze, in keeping with Federation Queen Anne, but details are somewhat simplified and the roof is a transverse gable, indicating a bungalow influence.

Built at the same time, the 1918-19 house at 5 Chaucer Crescent had made a full transition to the California Bungalow style, with a cross-gabled roof featuring a wide and flat front gable, and an almost complete absence of applied ornament. Instead, visual interest relies on a variety of cladding materials - tuckpointed brick, smooth and roughcast render, and timber shingles. All but one of the early interwar houses has a transverse gabled roof, clad in terracotta tiles, and all are of facebrick. 28 Chaucer Crescent and 17 Myrtle Road have dormer windows. The house at Dudley Parade is an exception, with a hipped roof with very wide eaves supported on timber struts.

After the dominance of the bungalow in the 1920s, the 1930s were more eclectic. The fashion changed from red brick to mottled 'clinker' or 'blue' bricks. A number of the 1930s house forms and styles continued with little change into the early post-war period, though what little ornament there had been was stripped away. One of the most popular styles at the time was Olde English (or Tudor Revival), which featured steep vergeless gables and a medieval influence. A classic example of this type is seen at 132 Canterbury Road, built in 1933 to a design by an unidentified architect. A mainstream translation of the style, indicated by a lower pitched vergeless gable is seen at the 1937 semidetached pair at 14-14A Dudley Parade.

Another common house type of the late 1920s and early 1930s is Georgian Revival, with a dominant hipped roof, symmetrical facade and simple classical details. A fine example is seen at 8 Chaucer Crescent, which has Ionic columns supporting the central porch, and also retains an original low brick front fence with a herringbone pattern. Its hipped roof was raised to a pyramidal peak as part of an extension in the 1990s. The legacy of the hipped-roof Georgian Revival houses was a generic hipped-roof house form reproduced in a symmetrical or asymmetrical form, devoid of any stylistic detail. An example is seen at 36 Dudley Parade, built in the late 1940s.

The third main style of the late interwar and early post-war periods is the Moderne. The first, architect-designed examples appeared in the early 1930s, and it was reproduced by builders in many suburbs by the end of the

decade. Intended to reflect the machine age and new engineering possibilities, houses of this style are almost stripped of detail (apart from brick details and horizontal lines to suggest speed, and often have corner windows that display the use of steel lintels. While the most advanced of these designs had a flat (or flat appearing) roof, most retained the tiled hipped roof that was standard at the time. The only example of the Moderne style in the precinct is a very late example at 20 Chaucer Crescent: a block of four cream-brick flats built in 1955.

The majority of the interwar/post-war dwellings are highly intact. Others are slightly altered (overpainted brick at 28 Chaucer Crescent; replacement windows at 14-14A Dudley Parade). A number have undergone more extensive alterations, but are still clearly recognisable as a given style and built-era so are still considered to contribute to the precinct. These include those with upper-level dormer additions (11 Chaucer Crescent, possibly 17 Myrtle Road), one whose roof has been raised from a ridge to a pyramidal peak (8 Chaucer Crescent), one with a reasonably sympathetic addition to the front facade (132 Canterbury Road - this 1994 extension uses the same clinker bricks and vergeless gable, but is much lower, leaving some visibility to the facade), and one whose front porch has been replaced with a larger patio with a garage below.

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/>