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# Western Beach Road Heritage Area

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## Location

Western Beach Road Heritage Area

## Municipality

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO2018

## Heritage Listing

Greater Geelong City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 1, 1900

What is Significant?

The Western Beach Heritage Area, extending between The Esplanade (to the north) and near Malone Street (to the south), includes residences dating from the Victorian, Federation, Interwar and Post-War periods which overlook Corio Bay. The area, includes many substantial houses that were erected for prominent citizens close to the town centre on premier bayside allotments and/or designed by prominent Geelong-based architects.

The character of the precinct is defined generally by wide allotments and high quality residential buildings, either single or two storey. Typically houses have open gardens to the street to maximise views across Corio Bay, some Post-War places also incorporating original landscape elements such as brick planter beds. Also contributing to the significance of the precinct are original front fences, including cast iron palisade fences to Victorian residences and low brick fences to Post-War houses.

The significant and contributory buildings in the precinct are largely constructed of masonry. Unusually, a high percentage of the Victorian period houses in the precinct incorporate faceted bays to the facades and most have roofs clad in slate. This includes the symmetrical *Fernshaw* (no. 4) and *Glenburnie* (no. 52-54) as well as the asymmetric house at no. 36, and *Warrain* (no. 56). A few Victorian residences also retain cast iron palisade fences. There are fewer examples from the Federation and Interwar, though these generally have more complex or steeply pitched roofs. Residences from the Post-War period reflect Modernist influences with larger windows and low-pitched roofs, and generally have cream brickwork.

How is it Significant?

The Western Beach Heritage Area is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Greater Geelong.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, the Western Beach Heritage Area is significant as a prestigious residential area that includes substantial houses from the Victorian, Federation, Interwar and Post-War periods. These houses were erected for prominent residents of Geelong, with many of the earliest houses originally having larger land holdings. Developed from the mid-19th century, land in the precinct has been progressively subdivided with several high quality Post-War houses erected in the location of established gardens which had previously been part of larger Victorian period holdings. This includes the notable residence at no.2 which was erected on part land that had previously been part of the holdings of *Fernshaw* (no. 4). During this time there was a shift in the precinct to multi-residential living, involving the conversion of large houses, such as *Llanberris*, to flats. (Criterion A)

The Western Beach Heritage Area is of aesthetic significance as a waterfront residential area which is characterised by substantial, high quality residences mostly from the Victorian and Post-War periods, with a few houses also from the Federation and Interwar periods. Indicative of this quality is the fact that the houses are typically masonry and many have tiled roofs. They are generally good examples of their type and are mostly intact with open garden settings. Several were designed by eminent local architects, such as Davidson & Henderson. (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Geelong City Fringe Heritage Area Review, RBA Architects + Conservation Consultants, 2018;
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	Previously part of the City Fringe Heritage Area,
Hermes Number	202173
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

The Western Beach Heritage Area is a residential precinct located on the high ground to Western Beach overlooking Corio Bay. The precinct includes residences which front Western Beach Road between The Esplanade in the north, extending almost as far south as Malone Street. The precinct includes a relatively high proportion of substantial houses, many of which are architect designed and/or are good examples of their type.

Many of the significant and contributory buildings in the precinct date to the Victorian and Post-War periods, with a similar number for each. There are fewer examples from the Federation and Interwar periods. Buildings in the precinct are either one or two storeys with a few dating from the Post-War period having an attic level (single storey plus attic level). All houses are constructed of masonry, either face brick or rendered, except for the three timber houses located immediately to the north of Ginn Street. Of the masonry houses, the majority are face brick though a few are now painted.

Houses to Western Beach Road are oriented parallel with the side boundaries (except for nos 1 and 1a) such that those at the north and south ends of the precinct are located at an angle to the street which curves to follow the shoreline of Corio Bay. Most houses in the precinct are detached though there are three attached pairs: the Victorian pair at nos 38 and 40, an early Victorian residence converted to a pair at nos 12 and 12a, and a Post-War pair at nos 1 and 1a. In addition, there is a mid-20th century block of flats (no. 42) as well as the Victorian residence *Llanberris* (no. 30) which has been converted to flats. All houses are set back from the street and most have open gardens to the front, maximising views of Corio Bay.

All significant and contributory houses have a verandah/porch to the front with Victorian places having either a large verandah, often returning around one side, or a small recessed entry porch. All Federation and Interwar residences have a verandah to the front whilst those from the Post-War period have a small porch to the lower level or a balcony to the upper level. Original windows from all periods are timber framed. There are sash types to all houses except those from the Post-War period which have windows and doors arranged in a large unit. Earlier houses have a regular fenestration pattern with high solid to void ratio typical of buildings from these periods.

Victorian period houses mostly have a pitched roof clad in slate, except for no. 26 and the paired houses at nos 38-40 which are clad in corrugated metal sheeting. Most roofs are visible, though a few are concealed behind a parapet. Several of the Victorian houses in the precinct have faceted bays to the facade. Notable Victorian residences *Fernshaw* (no. 4) and *Glenburnie* (no. 52-54) have two bays either side of a central recessed porch, a noted design feature of the prolific Geelong architects Davidson & Henderson. A few Victorian residences at the southern end of the precinct retain cast iron palisade fences with basalt plinths.

Federation and Interwar period residences also have pitched roofs, with those from the former often being more complex, that is consisting of hipped and gable sections. The Federation period houses are usually non-masonry (that is, clad in weatherboards). Houses from these periods, along with most of those from the Victorian period, retain original chimneys.

Places dating from the Post-War period reflect Modernist influences with an emphasis placed on simplified, more cubic forms and horizontal articulation. All have low pitched (including skillion) or flat roofs and often incorporate some lightweight cladding in combination with face brick, usually cream, to the walls. Most houses from this period also retain original landscaping elements, including brick planter beds and/or front fences.

*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/>*