

Brickfields Environs Precinct



17-19 Carnarvon Street.jpg



South side of Caroline Street.jpg



Brickfields

Location

Aberdeen Street and Bowler Street and Carnarvon Street and Caroline Street and Fletcher Street and Loch Street and Munro Street HAWTHORN EAST, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - June 1, 2022

What is significant?

The Brickfields Environs Precinct, comprising 3-23 & 2-24 Aberdeen Street; 1-33 & 4-46 Bowler Street; 1-25 & 2-20 Carnarvon Street; 1-37 & 2-42 Caroline Street; 61-75 & 52-74 Fletcher Street; 1-31 & 2-18 Loch Street; 1-41 & 2B-28 Munro Street, Hawthorn East, is significant. These streets were largely created by two 1888 subdivisions around what was then the Hawthorn Brick Works (now Fritsch-Holzer Park), established in 1883 and operated until 1972. The streets retain modest working-class housing from the late Victorian, Edwardian and interwar eras. A number of the interwar houses retain their original front fences, which are also contributory (at 29-33 Bowler Street, 2 Carnarvon Street, 16 Loch Street and 5 Munro Street). The nineteenth-century infrastructure, including bluestone pitched laneways and bluestone kerb and channel to Bowler and Carnarvon streets, are also contributory. The Auburn Bowls Club site is Contributory, particularly the bowling greens, while the built elements are all Non-contributory.

The row of semi-detached brick dwellings at 13-19 Carnarvon Street and at 22-40 Bowler Street are Significant. The following properties are Non-contributory to the precinct: 20 & 21 Aberdeen Street; 2 & 19 Bowler Street; 14, 16, 18 and 20 Carnarvon Street; 23, 27, 28 (all units), 29, 31-33 and 35 Caroline Street; 56 & 58 Fletcher Street; 1, 6 & 9 Loch Street; and 1, 20, 21-23 & 33 Munro Street. The rest are Contributory.

How is it significant?

The Brickfields Environs Precinct is of local historical, architectural and social significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The Brickfields Environs Precinct is of historical significance as tangible evidence of the influence of both public transport and employment centres on the construction of housing in Hawthorn East. As noted in the advertisements for the Symonds' Paddock subdivision, the nearby tram terminus, at the corner of Auburn and Riversdale roads, was a drawcard for new residents. The Hawthorn Brickworks, which operated from 1883 until 1972, also drew residents who were employed at the brickworks. The resultant housing stock housed many working-class residents when built, such as brickmakers, carters, laborers, die pinkers, painters, blacksmiths, coach builders and strikers, with the allotments and houses smaller and more modest than the Hawthorn East standard. (Criterion A)

The Brickfields Environs Precinct is significant as a collection of houses that illustrate typical working-class housing from the late Victorian period until World War II. The more modest finances of the original occupiers are visible in the small allotment sizes – leading to a very high proportion of single-fronted houses and timber-framed houses of all eras, as well as many semi-detached dwellings. The predominant style in the late nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century was the Italianate. These houses display characteristic elements such as low-pitched hipped roofs, chimneys with a rendered cornice, bracketed eaves, front verandahs with chamfered posts or Corinthian columns and cast-iron ornament, double-hung sash windows often with sidelights, and four-panelled front doors. Some of the most elaborately decorated houses of this era are Augustus Andrew Fritsch's pair of semi-detached polychrome brick houses at 13-19 Carnarvon Street, which feature highly ornamented front parapets. The Edwardian/Federation houses, both single-fronted and double-fronted, are recognisable by their half-timbered front gables and/or high hipped roofs with corbelled brick chimneys. Those brick houses shift from the Victorian brown brick to red brick. The most striking group from this era are the brick

semi-detached row at 22-40 Bowler Street, which are massed to look like asymmetrical Queen Anne villas, and have unusual details such as corner windows. Interwar houses in the precinct occur in large clusters as well as single examples at the edges. Those of the 1920s are California Bungalows, almost all of them built of timber, one of which retains an original post and woven wire fence. They have gabled roofs (front-facing or transverse) with gabled front porches supported on tapered piers or paired posts on a pier. An unusual row of late 1930s double-fronted semi-detached timber houses survives on Carnarvon Street. One of the most common styles of the late 1930s Old English or Tudor Revival is well represented in the precinct. These houses all have characteristic vergeless gables with corbelled eaves, and are built of face brick on its own or paired with textured render. The fashion to mass semi-detached pairs to look like a single house continues in this period. A number of the 1930s houses retain their original front fences, usually of masonry to match the house. The houses are enhanced by the retention of the original nineteenth-century street infrastructure, including bluestone pitched laneways and kerb and channel. (Criterion D)

The Brickfields Environs Precinct is significant for its associations with the Fritsch and Holzer families, who owned the Hawthorn Brickworks and were influential in the development of housing around it. August Fritsch resided on the then Fritschs Road (now Bowler Street) in the 1870s, before the rest of the precinct was subdivided, and owned a number of rental properties by the 1890s. Another of the brickworks founders, Anton Holzer, owned land on Carnarvon Street and commissioned the son of his business partner, architect AA Fritsch, to design two pairs of semi-detached Boom-style cottages in 1890 (Nos. 13-19). AA Fritsch and Annie Holzer owned a number of properties on Loch Street and resided there in the 1890s. (Criterion H)

The Auburn Bowls Club, founded in 1886, is a Contributory place in the precinct for its social values as a very long and ongoing venue for community sporting and recreational activities, for both the women and men of this area, and for its associations with the Fritsch and Holzer families. Augustus Fritsch provided the land and John Holzer providing a mortgage for its purchase. During the interwar era, Mrs Gertrude Holzer was a many-time club and state champion, as well as vice-president and president of the Auburn Ladies' Bowling Club. (Criteria G & H)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 6: Hawthorn East, Context, 2018;
Hermes Number	202206
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Description & Integrity

Brickworks Housing Precinct is situated between the intersection of Auburn and Riversdale roads and the former Hawthorn Brick Works site (now Fritsch-Holzer Park). It comprises a number of small, residential streets laid out during two subdivisions, creating an irregular pattern of development. Allotments sizes are generally small, with many single-fronted and semi-detached dwellings as the result. Parts of the precinct retain the street infrastructure typical of nineteenth-century subdivisions. This includes bluestone pitched kerb and channel to Bowler Street and Carnarvon Street, as well as bluestone pitched laneways between Carnarvon, Loch and Aberdeen streets (though the surviving laneway running east of Aberdeen Street has been paved in concrete).

The Auburn Bowls Club was created shortly after the brickworks were established. As noted in the history, it originally stretched to what is now Bowler Street which was likely named after it during World War I. The current size and layout of the site was finalised in 1934 when the allotments at 21-31 Bowler Street were subdivided and sold off. The 1960s clubhouse stretches along the northern side of the site, while there are two large bowling greens and small shelters to the south.

The precinct developed in bursts, beginning with the two initial subdivisions in 1888 and many late Victorian houses, then groups of Edwardian dwellings many of which are semi-detached, a pocket of 1920s bungalows, and final infill development in the mid to late 1930s which is particularly pronounced on the north side of Bowler Street. Little survives of the earliest development of Bowler Street, which existed as early as 1854 (as Greeves

Road), and provided access to the brickworks from 1883. As noted in the history, August Fritsch resided on this street in the 1870s, but there is no indication that this early house survives. As noted in the history, the sole brick semi-detached pair of nineteenth-century dwellings, at 44-46 Bowler Street, has been identified as a rental property owned by Fritsch.

The houses constructed by the turn of the century can all be characterised as Italianate in style. The Italianate is characterised by low-pitched hipped roofs, chimneys with a rendered cornice, bracketed eaves (many with raised panels between them), front or return verandahs with slender posts or columns and cast-iron ornament, double-hung sash windows often with sidelights, and four-panelled front doors with raised cricket-bat mouldings. The houses can be divided into two basic groups: double-fronted houses which are often more elaborate in detail; and many modest single-fronted examples that are both freestanding and attached. The predominant building material in the precinct is timber, with a number of brick examples of both single and double-fronted houses.

In keeping with the Italianate style, the double-fronted houses are of two types: those with flat (block-fronted) symmetrical facades, and those with a hipped bay projecting to one side creating an asymmetrical facade. This projecting bay is either rectangular or canted in plan. Most of the houses are of timber construction, clad in boards machined to resemble the more expensive stone ashlar. There are also a few double-fronted houses built of bichrome and polychrome face brick (44-46 Bowler Street).

The double-fronted houses sit on medium sized blocks so only have front verandahs, with one return verandah seen at 23 Aberdeen Street, Hawthorn East. Most of the houses have cast-iron lacework with chamfered timber or slender Corinthian columns, though the transition to the early twentieth century is demonstrated by a number that have turned timber posts and timber fretwork. Some houses with detailing of note include those with arched windows (9 Carnarvon Street, 10 Loch Street), one with double canted bay windows (13 Aberdeen Street), and one with cast swags and rosettes beneath the eaves (15 Aberdeen Street).

The large majority of the Italianate houses are single-fronted, either freestanding or semi-detached. Of these, about two-thirds are of timber construction with ashlar-look boards to the front facade. The others are of bichrome or polychrome face brick. Generally they have the same standard Italianate details as seen on most of the double-fronted houses, including cornices chimneys, bracketed eaves, a front verandah with cast-iron lacework, a four-panelled front door sometimes with side- and highlights, and double-hung sash windows in a variety of configurations. Most common is a single sash window with sidelights, others have single or paired sashes, and one has an elaborate canted bay window (9 Aberdeen Street). The front verandahs of these houses have the same range of posts as seen on the double-fronted houses, including Corinthian columns and chamfered timber posts, as well as some later examples with heavy turned timber posts indicating an Edwardian influence. (Note that many of these houses have slender turned timber posts which are nearly all modern attempts at restoration.)

The most unusual group of Victorian houses in the precinct demonstrate the Boom era version of the Italianate style, with elaborate cement-rendered parapets instead of exposed eaves. These are the two pairs of semi-detached, single-fronted houses at 13-19 Carnarvon Street designed by AA Fritsch c.1890. The parapets feature very extensive cast-cement ornament, including a cornice with panels, rosettes and brackets, a parapet with bas-relief guilloche (interlocking circle) motif, a raised central triangular pediment with an acroterion at the top, and urns to each end of the parapet. Below the parapet, each has a convex hipped verandah roof, cast-iron lacework and chamfered timber posts. Walls are of polychrome brickwork and windows are simple pairs. The four dwellings are highly intact apart from the overpainting of the brickwork to Nos.13-17, and a double-storey rear addition, well set back, to No. 19.

Houses of the Edwardian/Federation era, mostly built 1905 to 1915 in this precinct, are nearly all of two types: double-fronted timber houses, and single-fronted semi-detached pairs. Stylistically, they can be called Queen Anne or a simplified version of it. Nearly all of these houses have the distinctive half-timber front gable form, either defining the facade for single-fronted examples, or creating an asymmetrical villa form. Other changes from the Victorian era are the use of red brick (instead of brown), the predominant use of timber fretwork and turned timber posts for verandahs, and the move from corniced chimneys to those of corbelled red brick or red brick with a roughcast rendered cap. There is a return to narrow weatherboards, often with a band of decorative notched boards. Windows continue to be double-hung sashes (in pairs or sometimes with sidelights), or the newer casement windows with coloured-glass highlights. Doors transition to a two or three-panel form with an arched light at the top.

Among the classic asymmetrical double-fronted Edwardian houses, with a projecting gable to one side of the

facade and a verandah on the other, there are also a few examples that are more unusual in their massing. These include two examples with a projecting central bay (17 Caroline Street, 28 Munro Street), and an elegant block-fronted villa with rough-cast rendered walls above a weatherboard dado (16 Munro Street).

The large majority of Edwardian houses in the precinct are semi-detached pairs. Most of these dwellings have a half-timbered gable dominating their facade. There are, in addition, a few timber pairs that share a hipped roof that continues over the front verandah (5-7 & 2-4 Loch Street).

The most interesting group of semi-detached houses is at 22-40 Bowler Street, Hawthorn East. These pairs, built of tuckpointed red brick with a board band of roughcast render above, are all massed to look like a single detached villa. One of each pair has a half-timbered front gable, and both dwellings sit below what appears to be a shared hipped roof. Each dwelling has a verandah with tapered timber posts and solid timber arched friezes with pierced Art Nouveau designs. Two of the pairs both have side verandahs, with a principal feature of two dwellings (Nos. 22 & 26) being a corner window set below a band of notched boards (note that the corner window motif did not become common until the late 1930s). The other pairs have the half-timber gable to one dwelling and a verandah across the other, in a more typical rendition of a single villa.

Interwar houses in the precinct occur in large clusters as well as single examples at the edges. Many of them are adjacent to the brickworks, suggesting a release of land at this time. The 1920s houses can all be described as California Bungalows, and nearly all of them are detached timber dwellings. Of particular note is a row of double-fronted bungalows at 3-19 Munro Street. (NB: 1 Munro Street is also a California Bungalow, but an upper storey addition has been constructed directly in line with its facade, obscuring its original form, so it has been graded Non-contributory.) This row demonstrates the principle features and types of California Bungalows, including gable-fronted and transverse gabled roofs clad in tiles, gable-fronted porches with weatherboards or simplified half-timbering in the gable, and tapered roughcast piers or paired timber posts on a brick plinth supporting them. Windows are simple double-hung sashes in a projecting box frame. There are examples of simple leadlights (19 Munro Street) and multiple panes (1 Carnarvon Street) to upper sashes, but most are plain.

The California Bungalow style continued to be built in the early 1930s, but with a main hipped roof. There is a fine example of a semi-detached pair massed like one large bungalow at 1-3 Bowler Street. An unusual row of semi-detached pairs at 2-12 Carnarvon Street can also be considered late examples of the style. These double-fronted weatherboard dwellings have a shared tiled hipped roof, pairs of six-over-one sash windows, and small gabled porches with dwarf Tuscan columns resting on brick piers or full-height clinker-brick piers. The front doors have high-waisted proportions typical of the interwar era, with a leadlight at the top. There are also brick double-fronted semi-detached pairs, with projecting hipped bays at either end, creating a U-shaped plan, and stripped Moderne window surrounds (23-25 Bowler Street).

One of the most common styles of the late 1930s Old English or Tudor Revival is well represented in the precinct. These houses all have characteristic vergeless gables with corbelled eaves. As was typical of the style, all are built of brick with a tiles roof. There are two main types in the precinct: face brick houses of clinker or mixed face brick (e.g., 68-70 Fletcher Street, 2A-2 Munro Street, 23-25 Carnarvon Street) and those that combine render with clinker bricks (72-74 Fletcher Street, 31-33 Bowler Street). In one case, half a semi-detached pair is all face brick and the other mostly render (27-29 Bowler Street). All of these examples are semi-detached pairs, massed to look like a single detached house.

Interwar houses in the precinct are the only ones to retain original fences and gates. Some retain timber posts and woven wire fences (2 Carnarvon Street, 5 Munro Street), one has a timber picket fence with round-topped pickets and pointed posts (16 Loch Street), while those of the late 1930s have brick and/or rendered dwarf front fences (29-33 Bowler Street).

Commonly, alterations to houses in the precinct include the replacement of Victorian (and some Edwardian) verandah posts (some less sympathetic than others) and cast-iron lacework, and the overpainting of face brickwork or even over-rendering in a few cases (29 and 31-33 Munro Street). A smaller number have unsympathetic replacement windows or front doors, or verandahs rebuilt mid-century. A whole row of houses on the north side of Caroline Street have front verandahs that have been extended to the side to form a carport. There are also a few houses with visible upper-storey extensions. Where these extensions are legible as such, and the original roof form of the house is clear, the houses are considered to still contribute to the precinct. Another handful of houses have been reclad, both timber houses with vinyl or aluminium cladding installed over the original boards, as well as two houses with new brick cladding applied after World War II (20 & 24 Munro

Street). In the case of 24 Munro Street, this single-fronted house retains its original front window and doorway, as well as the overall roof form and a chimney, so is still legible as an Italianate dwelling and contributory to the precinct.

Overall, integrity of the streetscapes is high, apart scattered examples of Non-contributory properties – both contemporary dwellings and extremely altered original houses – and one concentration of Non-contributory flats at the east end of Caroline Street. There are another two blocks of late-twentieth century flats on Munro Street – a development of the kind that characterises Hawthorn’s development in this period.

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/>