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# Mercer's Hill Heritage Area

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## Location

NEWTOWN, GREATER GEELONG CITY

## Municipality

GREATER GEELONG CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO1923

## Heritage Listing

Greater Geelong City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Statement of Cultural Significance

The Mercer's Hill Heritage Precinct is significant as a distinctive residential area defined by Late Victorian, Edwardian, Federation and particularly interwar Bungalow styled dwellings. A large number of the dwellings have elevated and sloping landscape settings. Most of the dwellings have a single storey appearance with detached compositions, hipped and/or gabled roof forms, front and side verandahs, timber framed double hung windows, corrugated sheet metal roof cladding, timber weatherboard and rendered brick wall construction and broad eaves. The pair of brick garages at 104-106 and 108-110 Noble Street situated on the frontage boundaries, also contribute to the character of this part of the streetscape, while the remaining garages in the area are set back behind the front building lines. Further contributing to the heritage values of the area are the early front fences, including those at 100-110 Noble Street. Historically, the area is significant for its important eras of residential development after the subdivision of the area in the mid 1880s, when the Mercer's Hill Estate created a number of residential allotments fronting Noble Street and Mercers Parade. Further development occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Yet, it was during the interwar period when the area was largely transformed by residential development. Historically, the area is also significant for its associations with gold mining after specks of gold were found in a gully crossing Noble Street (near Pakington Street) in 1862. Shafts were sunk on Mercer's Hill by the Geelong Gold and Coal Mining Prospecting and Mining Company, while other mining companies sunk shafts in the area in the 1860s and 1870s. None of these gold prospecting operations appear to have been successful, although archaeological evidence may survive as a legacy of the mining era.

The Mercer's Hill Heritage Precinct is **architecturally** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criterion D.2). It demonstrates original and early design qualities associated with the residential development of the area from the late 19th century until c.1948. These qualities are expressed in the predominant interwar Bungalow styled and to a lesser degree the Late Victorian, Federation/Edwardian dwellings, that are single storey in appearance and have predominantly detached compositions. The buildings include the following design characteristics: gabled and/or hipped roof forms, together with a minor gable and/or verandah that project towards the street frontage or at the side, timber framed double hung windows, arranged singularly, in pairs, galvanized corrugated steel roof cladding and a limited number of Marseilles terra cotta tiles, verandahs that are mainly supported by timber posts and brick piers, or solely with brick piers, and rectilinear brick chimneys, with some featuring rendered or soldier-coursed tops, gable infill comprising timber shingles, some with gable ventilator. The dwellings are constructed in horizontal timber weatherboards (limited number in brick and rendered finish) with a 25 to 35 degree pitched roof forms and wide eaves with exposed timber rafters. Further contributing to the heritage values of the area are the early front fences, including those at 100-110 Noble Street. The pair of brick garages at 104/106 and 108/110 Noble Street situated on the front boundary also contribute to the significance of the area. These garages have been specifically constructed to be located at the front boundary and form part of the original design of the dwellings. The remainder of garages in the area are setback behind the front building line .

Overall, these dwellings constitute 79% of the building stock in the area. The elevated and sloping land and mature garden settings, together with the original or early front fences and retaining walls along Noble Street also contribute to the significance of the area.

The Mercer's Hill Heritage Area is **historically** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criteria A.4, H.1). It is associated with important eras of residential development after the subdivision of the area in the mid-late 1880's but in particular from early 1900's period. The area is significant for it's association with gold mining activity and has the potential for archaeological assessment and investigation of material with the gold mining activity. Allotments in the first subdivision were sold from the mid 1880's.

The Mercer's Hill Heritage Area is **scientifically** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criterion C.2). It has the potential to yield archaeological research potential given the previous gold mining activity and in particular the shafts that were sunk in this area.

Overall, the Mercer's Hill Heritage Area is of **LOCAL** significance.

Hermes Number 46570

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

Physical Evidence

Building Character & Appearance

The Mercer's Hill Heritage Area is a residential area comprising 21 dwellings.

The dwellings are set in landscaped surrounds and are predominantly characterised by elevated single storey heights in a mix of interwar Bungalow styles, and to a lesser degree Late Victorian and Federation/Edwardian designs. Because of the large number of interwar dwellings they are largely characterised by the following: Gabled and/or hipped roof forms, together with a minor gable and/or verandah that project towards the street frontage or at the side.

Timber framed double hung windows, arranged singularly, in pairs.

Galvanized corrugated steel roof cladding and a limited number of Marseilles terra cotta tiles.

Verandahs are mainly supported by timber posts and brick piers, or solely with brick piers.

There are plain rectilinear brick chimneys, with some featuring rendered or soldier-coursed tops.

The gable infill comprises timber shingles.

Gable ventilator.

Constructed in horizontal timber weatherboards (limited number in brick and rendered finish).

25 to 35 degree pitched roof forms.

Wide eaves with exposed timber rafters.

Examples of interwar style dwellings are at 92 Noble Street, 96 Noble Street, 100 Noble Street and 110 Noble Street.

### Residential Garages and Carports

Each dwelling has front vehicular street access. There is a pair of early or original brick garages located on the front boundary at 104/106 Noble Street and 108/110 Noble Street. These are also identified on the Geelong and District Water Board Plan No 101 (Figure 9.13). These garages have been specifically constructed to be located at the front boundary and form part of the original design of the dwellings. The remainder of garages in the area are setback behind the front building line with the exception of the garage at 102 Noble Street which is located beneath the floor level of the dwelling and recessed into the garden setting.

In the Geelong heritage area context, there are no early garages which are a feature, as a result of the elevated and sloping nature of the site with large setbacks.

### Significance of Dwellings

Sixteen dwellings of the twenty two dwellings (73%) within the Mercer's Hill Heritage Area are considered to have significance within the area. There are three properties that have potential individual significance. One dwelling "Strathcona" is already included with a Heritage Overlay in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme as HO1344. Further details and a photograph of each of the dwellings are provided in the Inventory of Places Volume 2.

The properties that are considered to have individual Local Significance (C) listing are: 84 Noble Street;

108 Noble Street;

110 Noble Street;

130 Noble Street.

The dwellings buildings that have contributory significance (D) listing within the heritage precinct are:

82 Noble Street

86 Noble Street

88 Noble Street

90 Noble Street

92 Noble Street

96 Noble Street

98 Noble Street

100 Noble Street

102 Noble Street

104 Noble Street

106 Noble Street

The properties that are **NOT** considered to have significance within the precinct are at:

94 Noble Street

128 Noble Street

132 Noble Street

134 Noble Street

Urban Design & Engineering Infrastructure

Layout and Subdivision

The allotments within the Mercer's Hill Heritage Area follow a traditional grid pattern layout of subdivision.

The allotment sizes are generally uniform within the street and the precinct as a whole.

Setbacks

Throughout the precinct are regular front setbacks. The dwellings located between 100 to 110 Noble Street have an increased setback distance than the predominant building setback in the heritage area.

A feature of the area is the garden settings and retaining walls for the properties between No's 100 to 110 which are situated on elevated sloping land that contributes to the significance of the area.

All dwellings have side setbacks with clear visual building separation, except the pair of brick garages that are located on the front boundary line at 104/106 Noble Street and 108/110 Noble Street.

Engineering Infrastructure

The Mercer's Hill Heritage Area is characterized by concrete kerb and channel and concrete footpaths.

Front Fences

A feature of the Mercer's Hill Heritage Area are the early fences and retaining walls. Front fencing along Noble Street ranges in height from 1.0 to 1.5 metres (Photo 9.01 and 9.02). Early brick fences include those at 102, 106, 108 and 110 Noble Street which relate to the interwar and post era of the building.

Landscaping

The heritage area is characterised by established elevated and sloping garden settings particularly those properties located between 100 to 108 Noble Street. These buildings have generous setbacks.

Within the narrow nature strip on the north side of Noble Street are planted Lily Pily- *Acmena smithii* and Snow in Summer- *Melaleuca linariifolia* and on the south side are planted Queensland Brush Box- *Lophostemon confertus* and West Australian Flowering gum trees- *Melaleuca styphelioides*. These are more recent introduced species.

The setbacks to the properties include grassed areas, often bordered with flower beds or shrubbery and trees.

*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/>*