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# CANARY ISLAND DATE PALM AVENUE (PHOENIX CANARIENSIS)



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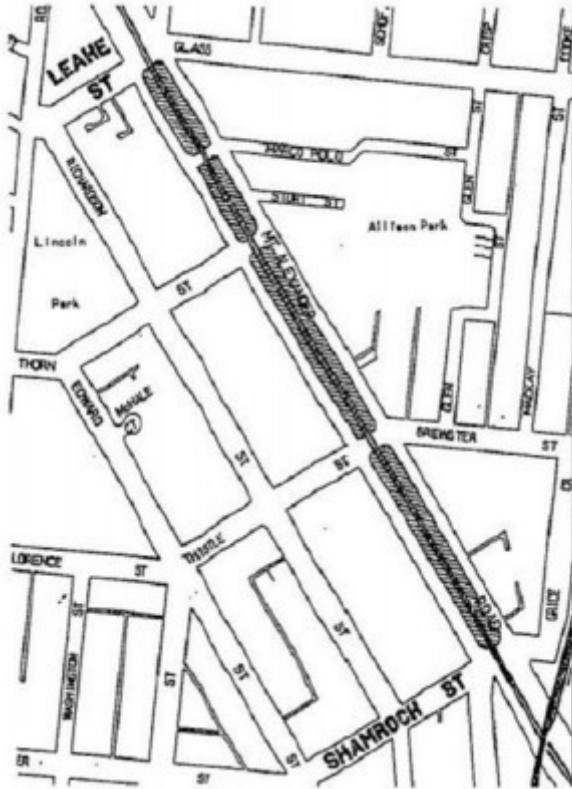
1 canary island date palm avenue mount alexander road essendon detail view



Canary Island Date Palm Avenue Mount Alexander Road Essendon June 2003



Canary Island Date Palm Avenue Mount Alexander Road Essendon June 2003



h01200 plan h1200

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### **Location**

MOUNT ALEXANDER ROAD ESSENDON, MOONEE VALLEY CITY

### **Municipality**

MOONEE VALLEY CITY

### **Level of significance**

Registered

### **Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number**

H1200

### **Heritage Overlay Numbers**

HO80

### **VHR Registration**

September 19, 1996

### **Heritage Listing**

## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 11, 1999

The avenue of 143 Canary Island Date Palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) along the median strip of Mt Alexander Road was planted in about 1929 following relocation and duplication of the tram tracks. The planting is the largest and longest single planting of Canary Island Date Palms in Victoria.

The Canary Island Date Palm Avenue in Mount Alexander Road Essendon between Shamrock Street and Leake Street is of aesthetic and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

The avenue of 143 Canary Island Date Palms is of outstanding aesthetic significance and landscape value. The planting provides an important landmark and avenue planting along a major arterial road to central Melbourne and on each side of a central tram line. The good condition of the palms, and their uniform size, regular spacing and formal planting arrangement contribute to the importance of the avenue.

The avenue is historically important as the most substantial avenue planting of Canary Island Date Palms in Victoria. As such it is reflective of a particular period of popularity of palms in the 1920s, especially *Phoenix canariensis*.

## Permit Exemptions

### General Exemptions:

General exemptions apply to all places and objects included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR). General exemptions have been designed to allow everyday activities, maintenance and changes to your property, which don't harm its cultural heritage significance, to proceed without the need to obtain approvals under the Heritage Act 2017.

Places of worship: In some circumstances, you can alter a place of worship to accommodate religious practices without a permit, but you must [notify](#) the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria before you start the works or activities at least 20 business days before the works or activities are to commence.

Subdivision/consolidation: Permit exemptions exist for some subdivisions and consolidations. If the subdivision or consolidation is in accordance with a planning permit granted under Part 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the application for the planning permit was referred to the Executive Director of Heritage Victoria as a determining referral authority, a permit is not required.

Specific exemptions may also apply to your registered place or object. If applicable, these are listed below. Specific exemptions are tailored to the conservation and management needs of an individual registered place or object and set out works and activities that are exempt from the requirements of a permit. Specific exemptions prevail if they conflict with general exemptions.

Find out more about heritage permit exemptions [here](#).

### Specific Exemptions:

#### EXEMPTIONS FROM PERMITS:

Removal of seedlings from the palm crowns

Emergency or safety works and powerlines clearance requirements

Repairs and maintenance to the tram lines and poles.

Construction dates 1929,  
Heritage Act Categories Registered place,  
Hermes Number 4920  
Property Number

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## History

### Contextual History:

The major arterial roads into the City of Melbourne are lined with avenues of trees to create grand entrances and boulevards. Those planted last century were planted with elms, planes and in St Kilda Road, Blue Gums were first grown and were later replaced by elms and plane trees. Elms, oaks, cypress and a few other species were planted as Avenues of Honour from 1918, after the First World War.

The avenue of Canary Island Date Palms is an exception to this planting theme and is the only substantial road planting of *Phoenix canariensis* in Victoria. An alternate planting with *Lophostemon confertus* occurs along Albert Road in South Melbourne. Small avenues are planted at the St Arnaud and Mildura Cemetery, Great Western Winery, Catani Gardens at St Kilda and is interplanted with *Washingtonia robusta* and *Butia capitata* along the main entrance in the St Kilda Botanical Gardens. In 1919 a row of 42 Canary Island Date Palms were planted around St Vincent Gardens in South Melbourne.

The only other major palm plantings are in the Mildura area where *Washingtonia filifera* are planted as avenues and rows along roads and date from about 1896.

Canary Island Date Palms were not planted in Victoria prior to 1890 and there are only a few known palm plantings from the early 1900s. A commemorative planting in the Royal Botanic Gardens is dated 1903 and is the earliest known planting. They were widely planted in Victoria after the First World War and popular during the Edwardian period and are a strong landscape theme of the 1920-1930s.

### History of Place:

Mt Alexander Road was the main route to the Bendigo and Castlemaine gold fields, and the rural towns in north and north-western Victoria. In 1883 the Plantations Committee was appointed by Council and their recommendations created the, "beautiful plantations in Mount Alexander Road". The Committee recommended that, "Mount Alexander Road north of Shamrock Street be planted with a double row of trees to its intersection with Bulla Road, at a sum not to exceed 50 pounds". Council placed a large order for young trees and accepted tenders within a few weeks for 500 guards.

It is not known what species were planted but the Committee recommended that in streets less than one chain in width only deciduous trees be planted, and in streets of more than that width evergreens and deciduous trees be planted alternatively. The trees the Committee intended to plant are, "different kinds of Elms, Turkish Oaks, Silver Poplars, and for evergreens *Pinus Insignis*, *Halpensis* [sic] Cedars, and *Grevillea robusta*".

The tram line to Essendon was opened in 1906 and ran along the west side of Mt Alexander Road and is shown on MMBW Plans of this time. In March 1929 the tram track were relocated and duplicated into the centre of the reserve from Essendon Station to Keilor Road It is unknown when the Canary Island Date Palms were planted, but it appears that they were planted following completion of these works. There is no evidence of the palms in a 1924 photograph of Mount Alexander Road.

Since the mid 1980s twelve mature palms (6 in 1984-5) have been transplanted to replace missing palms. A car park was constructed in the northern island between Marco Polo Street and Leake Street in about 1988.

## Description of Place:

An avenue of 143 palms, extending 820 metres in the Mt Alexander road reserve. The palms are planted opposite one another. Shamrock Street to Thistle Street; West - 27 palms, East - 27 palms; Thistle Street to Thorn Street; West - 24 palms, East - 22 palms; Thorn Street to Marco Polo Street; West - 11 palms, East - 11 palms; Marco Polo Street to Leake Street; West - 10 palms, East - 11 palms

The measurement of an average palm is; Circumference: 3.0m; Height: 7.5m; Canopy Spread: 7.2m (1985). The two rows are 13.4m apart and the palms are at spacings of 8.3m.

The palms are planted in a grassed median in three of the islands, while the northern island has been asphalted and is used for car parking. Fortunately the palms show no ill effects. The two rows of palms are planted to either side of two sets of central tram tracks laid in bluestone gravel edged with bluestone blocks. Down the centre is a row of tram poles erected in 1929, but with new side arms.

The palm avenue is in good condition. Annual maintenance includes the under pruning of dead fronds and the removal of seedlings from the crown. The major weed is *Coprosma repens*.

## Extent of Registration

### NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

As the Executive Director for the purpose of the Heritage Act, I give notice under Section 46 that the Victorian Heritage Register is amended by including Heritage Register Number 1200 in the category described as a Heritage Place:

Canary Island Date Palm Avenue, Mount Alexander Road, Essendon (between Shamrock Street and Leake Street), Moonee Valley City.

Extent:

1. All of the land and 143 Canary Island Date Palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) shown hatched on Diagram 607331 held by the Executive Director of the Heritage Council, being the medium strip of Mount Alexander Road, Essendon, between Shamrock Street and Leake Street.

Dated 5 September 1996

RAY TONKIN

Executive Director

[*Victoria Government Gazette* No. G37 19 September 1996 p.2473]

*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/>*