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# Nobelius Nursery And Emerald Country Club

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## Location

Lakeside Drive, (Country Club), EMERALD VIC 3782 - Property No G13028

## Municipality

CARDINIA SHIRE

## Level of significance

State

## Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H2285

## Heritage Listing

National Trust

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - July 24, 2008

The Nobelius Nursery at Emerald, commenced c.1886 and greatly expanded over the next three decades, the land in part reused for the Emerald Country Club estate from the mid 1920s with a clubhouse from 1928-29, is of State cultural significance

- as the site of one of Victoria's and Australia's foremost plant nursery operations; surviving attributes include two residences occupied by Nobelius, at least one (probably two) packing sheds, close links with the Belgrave to Gembrook narrow gauge railway line (a facility sought and heavily used by Nobelius in his nursery and orchard business) including a siding serving the packing shed, retention of trees and other plantings from Nobelius occupation (especially around his residence Carramar and throughout the Emerald Country Club estate). and a small portion of land which formed the last remnant of the Nobelius nursery and now named the 'Nobelius Heritage Nursery';

- for its ability to demonstrate the features of a country club estate in Victoria dating from the interwar period and based on American precedents; this is a rare and relatively intact example and attributes include the clubhouse, surrounding golf course with associated landscaping (especially the first nine holes which were the first to be developed), subdivision plan of 1931, roads formations (especially Lakeside Drive which was based on a track through the Nobelius nursery), several residences (notably 9, 11, 21, 34, 36, 38 and 66 Lakeside Drive and 22 Sycamore Avenue - more may be disclosed from further research) which date to the early days of the estate, the lake and lake surrounds (including the rotunda);

- for the individually notable and externally well-preserved clubhouse design, being the most complete example of the country clubhouses built in this era. The clubhouse is also evocative of the American Craftsmen precedents, with the extensive use of natural finishes, inside and externally, and particularly for its demonstration of Arts and Crafts principles by selection of materials from the site (in this case stone);

- for its historical links with the development of the Emerald district, especially land selection, local roads, the narrow gauge railway line and the township;

- for the aesthetic significance of constituent elements; these derive from a consistent use of local materials (especially stone), mature trees and shrubs, lack of boundary fences in the country club estate, and vistas (especially to and from the golf course and across the Heritage Nursery site).ANALYSIS

The Nobelius Nursery and Emerald Country club form part of a large and complex site, with many overlays of history and development. This analysis considers the area under several major headings to enable the cultural significance of the site to be adequately assessed.

B5919 Emerald Country Resort & Carramar Homestead now incorporated in this file.

Classified: 23/11/1994

Other Names Crichton Road, Emerald (Packing Shed), Ca 53B, No Section, Parish Of Gembrook, County Of Evelyn (Carramar And Former Koenig Residence),

Hermes Number 70200

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

### DESCRIPTION

The present classification includes two principal areas:

- the Nobelius residence (Carramar) and Emerald Country Club estate; and
- the Nobelius nursery and packing shed on the narrow gauge railway.

The main portion of the site is located around the original Nobelius nursery and two former Nobelius residences. This is the site that was partially redeveloped as the Emerald Country Club. The main features of the area are located along Lakeside Drive. The road is lined with dense vegetation and includes several conifers presumed to date from the Nobelius nursery. Several eucalypts are remnants trees planted for economic oil-extraction purposes and a large oak in the property Oak Lee. The road (now Lakeside Drive) was a track through the earliest section of the Nobelius nursery and at the present corner of Sycamore Avenue is a former Nobelius nursery packing shed, converted to a holiday residence as part of the early Emerald Country Club development. Across the creek is the a house which is on the site and may contain remnants of the former Koenig (and Nobelius) residence, architecturally reworked as part of the country club development. On the crest of the hill, now Carramar Drive, is Carramar, the former Nobelius residence. This is a large brick structure with an extensive verandah overlooking the former nursery site in the valley to the south-east. The garden is now mature and includes many plants dating from the Nobelius period of ownership. These include *Quercus robur*, *Q. canariensis*, *Q. canarensis* x *Q. robur*, *Q. palustris* and *Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii'. Nearby is a large example of the rare cultivar *Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula'.

The Emerald Country Club is comprised of several major elements: the clubhouse and associated landscaping, the golf course, the lake, the road and subdivision pattern, several early residences and mature landscaping. The clubhouse design follows the American Craftsman and English Arts & Crafts Bungalow precedents in its use of

the low gabled form, local rubble freestone (inside and out), and other natural finishes such as the Marseilles pattern terracotta roof tiles, stained and lacquered timber linings and joinery (interior). The pergola form of the porch/verandah is also of note, resembling the first design for the residence Marathon, at Mount Eliza, by architect Walter Butler. Some of the external colouring (buff stucco, green joinery) survives at the rear of the clubhouse. This conscious use of natural materials is also reflected in the construction of the log lake-side pavilion (presumed originally roofed with paling/shingle).

American country club designs inspired the open planning with its intercommunicating lounge and dining spaces, original use of stained timber panelling internally (since painted over), the timber board lining of the pitched ceiling, the exposed timber trusswork (with stencilled designs and bordered panels on the underside of each chord), and rubble stonework in the fireplaces. The tapered chimney breast in one of the public rooms (dining), with its brick casing near the ceiling level, is also of note. Other more typical but nevertheless valuable contributory elements include the stained timber ceiling strapping, chain-hung brass light fittings, stained picture rail and brick-clad fireplace to the former manager's office. A similar approach can be seen in both the Yarra Bend Golf Clubhouse (use of local timbers) and that at Wattle Park, the latter also employing English design precedents but lacking internal integrity. Most of the Victorian clubhouse designs in this idiom have been altered.

A main drive leads to the clubhouse from the estate and the turning circle encloses a bed dominated by a very large *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Elegans'. The clubhouse grounds contain beds with shrubs and to the north is a semi-circular terrace, part of the early landscaping. The fairways are lined with mature trees, particularly *Pinus radiata*. Opposite the clubhouse, the creek has been dammed to form a small lake. The embankment is partially formed by Lakeside Drive and the open setting of the lake provides a contrast to the dense landscaping around the country club residences. The northern shore of the lake has a small rotunda constructed of logs, a feature shown in early photographs.

The country club estate was developed during the late 1920s and 1930s, principally in the vicinity of the clubhouse rather than on the higher ground. The former Bottomley residence (9 Lakeside Drive) has not been visited but its garden is distinguished by a lily pond sited at the bottom of the garden and overhung with tree ferns and dense vegetation. An informal path through this garden links Oak Lee and Road's End.

Oak Lee (11 Lakeside Drive) is a distinctive landmark in the estate with its steeply pitched roof, timber shingled walls and tall brick chimneys. The garden is terraced by paths and the drive, and dominated by a massive oak (*Quercus robur*). Stone lined paths run through rolling lawns and long views to the bush form a backdrop. The garden contains a number of *Camellia* and *Rhododendron* cultivars as well as a large *Quercus palustris*.

Road's End (21 Lakeside Drive) is on the opposite side of the valley to Oak Lee and is nestled in a densely landscaped garden. The residence makes effective use of rough stone on the base, columns and steps. The rustic theme is further utilised in the gable ends with rough sawn weatherboards. The dense landscaping is relieved in parts by open lawns and an open rear yard bordered by bush. The garden contains several fine specimens of *Camellia japonica* cultivars and a large example *Gordonia axillaris*.

Further up Lakeside Drive, to the east of Road's End is the former Koenig residence (66 Lakeside Drive). This is built around the early selection-era residence and the early roof line is clearly discernible (especially when compared with photographs in the Nobelius catalogues). Renovations undertaken during the country club-era include rough stone columns and chimney (similar to Road's End) and a timber pergola. The garden is terraced by low stone walls and has the extensive lawns. The north elevation of the house is dominated by a massive *Quercus canariensis* (its trunk now enclosed by the building). Elsewhere in the garden are several large *Camellia japonica*, many *Rhododendron* cultivars, an old *Castanea sativa*, two *Telopea speciosissima* (in garden beds) and *Cyathea australis*.

The main row of early country club residences are located on the north side of Lakeside Drive. Sycamore Lodge (34 Lakeside Drive) is a former Nobelius packing shed, converted to a residence in the early 1930s. The exterior is rendered with a rough trowelled finish and thick masonry columns support a verandah at the east end. The garden is terraced and includes banks of shrubs and several large trees, including a very old multi-trunked *Cordyline* sp. and two large specimens of the uncommon *Carpinus betula*.

To the east is 36 Lakeside Drive, a gable roofed residence (recently extended). The site slopes steeply to Lakeside Drive except for the large podium on which the residence sits. The garden contains several large *Acer*

palmatum and an old *Populus alba*.

Further east, and separated from its neighbour by a hedge of *Prunus laurocerasus*, is 38 Lakeside Drive, a substantial residence with basement, constructed of 'Cindcrete' blocks. This is another steeply sloping site and features a row of *Acer palmatum* along the drive, *Camellia japonica* cultivars, *Abies pinsapo*, a clump of *Trachycarpus fortunei* and a specimen of *Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea'.

The easternmost residence in this row is 40 Lakeside Drive. The site is even steeper than those sites to the west and the terracing creates small compartments within the garden. The east front of the residence faces a small ornamental pool and in the garden is a rare *Quercus macrocarpa* (Mossy Cup Oak). The garden contains a moulded cement sundial with Australian influenced motifs forming a frieze around the shaft.

Other early residences are located in Sycamore Drive, including Glen Eagles (22 Sycamore Drive) named after the famous golf course in Scotland. This handsome allotment faces one of the Emerald Country Club golf fairways and the residence sits well back on the block, giving it an extensive view. The early motor garage survives on Sycamore Drive, now dwarfed by several massive trees.

The southern portion of this classification is centred on the Nobelius Heritage Park, Crichton Road, Emerald. The site retains a large packing shed sited on a siding on the narrow gauge railway line, a museum housing a considerable collection of Nobelius material, and many trees remaining from the Nobelius Nursery (and its later incarnations). These include several *Camellia japonica* cultivars, *Ilex* species/cultivars, *Cedrus deodara* in nursery rows, *Acer saccharinum* (near office), *Styrax obassia* (rare) and a number of economic plantings, including *Eucalyptus macartherii*, Flax, and reputedly the original introduction of Chinese Gooseberry (*Actinidia chinensis*) to this State. A residence on the south of the railway line retains many rare or uncommon plants and may have been the residence of Carl Oscar Nobelius (although this has not yet been confirmed by detailed research). The huge *Pinus radiata* trees along the railway line are part of a former enclosure of the packing shed.

*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/>*