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# The Boulevard Parklands



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## Location

YARRA BOULEVARD, RICHMOND PARK & BURNLEY PARK BURNLEY, YARRA CITY

## Municipality

YARRA CITY

## Level of significance

Recommended for Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO299

## Heritage Listing

Yarra City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - August 31, 2015

*What is significant?*

Richmond Park, Burnley Park, and Yarra Boulevard are significant. The significant features are:

- . The remnant indigenous vegetation throughout the park, mostly River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camalduensis*).
- . The mature trees, planted before 1945. They include Cedars (*Cedrus sp.*), Conifers (*Cupressus sp.*), Dutch Elms (*Ulmus x hollandica*), Oaks (*Quercus. sp.*), various palms including Canary Island (*Phoenix canariensis*),

Washingtonias (*Washingtonia filifera* and *Washingtonia robusta*) and Chinese Windmill (*Trachycarpus fortunei*), Pines (*Pinus sp.*), and Sugar Gums (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*). Of particular note are the mature elms in the north section of the park and adjacent to Yarra Boulevard that appear to be remnants of the Dutch Elm avenue originally established c.1870s, the mature Sugar Gums in the Circus Site, Golf Course and Kevin Barlett Reserve, and the group of palms at the east corner of Swan Street and Park Grove.

. The hard landscaping associated with the construction of Yarra Boulevard including lava rock garden bed edging, random rock retaining walls, low walls/fences, planters and steps, generally located along the sides of Yarra Boulevard and in various locations throughout the park.

. The layout of paths in area to the north of Burnley Ovals, which date from prior to 1945.

The following places and features are Individually Significant and have their own statement of significance:

- . Burnley Horticultural College (HO306, VHR 2052),
- . Corroboree or Marker Tree (HO298), and
- . Park Keeper's cottage (former) (Individually Significant within HO299).

The following trees and features are Not Contributory:

- . The railways and roadways (with the exception of Yarra Boulevard),
- . Buildings constructed after 1945,
- . Trees and soft and hard landscaping established after 1945,
- . Modern park furniture including seating, bbqs and the like, and
- . Modern fencing.

#### *How is it significant?*

Richmond Park, Burnley Park, and Yarra Boulevard are of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Yarra.

#### *Why is it significant?*

It is historically significant as one of the oldest reserves in Victoria and demonstrates how large areas of land were set aside for parkland as part of the first surveys of Melbourne. The surviving nineteenth century fabric including the buildings and plantings associated with the Horticultural Society gardens, the remnants of the Dutch Elm Avenue, mature Sugar Gums and the park keeper's cottage are of particular significance as evidence of the development of the park during the nineteenth century. (Criterion A)

It is significant as an example of the large informal reserves created during the nineteenth century park, that contain sections of naturalistic landscapes with remnant indigenous vegetation combined with introduced plantings and hard landscape elements. (Criterion D)

It is historically and socially significant as the oldest park within Richmond and as a place of passive and active recreation that has been in continuous use for over 150 years. (Criterion A & G)

Yarra Boulevard is historically significant as an example of the major public works projects undertaken to provide unemployment relief during the Great Depression. It is an example of the roads constructed along 'scenic' routes during the interwar period and is associated with the increasing use of private motor cars for sightseeing and leisure. (Criteria A & D)

Aesthetically, it is significant for its semi-naturalistic and highly picturesque landscape, which combines remnant indigenous trees with semi-formal plantings of exotic species. Yarra Boulevard is notable as a fine example of an interwar public landscape with a distinctive character created by the rock walls and garden edging, and mature exotic trees and shrubs. (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Yarra - Richmond Conservation Study, John & Thurley O'Connor, Ros Coleman & Heather Wright, 1985; Yarra - City of Yarra Heritage Review, Allom Lovell & Associates, 1998; Yarra - City of Yarra Review of Heritage Overlay Areas, Graeme Butler & Associates, 2007; Yarra - Heritage Gap Study: Review of Central Richmond 2014, Context P/L, 2014;
Construction dates	1838, 1930,
Other Names	Survey Paddock, Richmond Park,
Hermes Number	103863
Property Number	

## Physical Description 1

### Remnant Fabric (Man Made)

The Yarra Boulevard is the dominant feature of the area, and features rock retaining walls and terraced shrubberies. A series of pathways leading from Bridge Road to Park Grove were constructed in the 1920s.

### Remnant Fabric (Vegetation)

The site features extensive plantings throughout, both remnant riparian vegetation and introduced exotic species. Of particular note is a dead River Red Gum ('Eucalyptus camaldulensis') scar tree, associated with the Wurundjeri Aboriginal group in the area occupied by Burnley Oval. Other remnant River Red Gums are scattered throughout the parklands. More recent plantings include various Oaks ('Quercus sp. '), Elms ('Ulmus sp. ') and Canary Island Date Palms ('Phoenix canariensis') along The Boulevard. Dense overgrown shrubberies also line the thoroughfare, many of the species being self-sown weeds.

### Potential Threats

The site in certain areas is derelict, particularly the shrubberies along The Boulevard. Further degeneration of these plantings will impact significantly on the heritage value of the site, particularly the failure to replace senescent specimens with the same species. Further introduction of inappropriately detailed constructed elements, particularly in relation to sporting facilities, which will further challenge the heritage character of the area.

### Management Steps

The site requires the preparation of a detailed master plan and management policy that should attempt to unify the various disparate elements throughout the extensive site, and reinforce the heritage character of the place. The plan should address maintenance and replacement strategies for vegetation, and appropriate detailing of hard landscaping. It should seek to encourage increased use of the site as a passive recreational area.

## Integrity

not assessed

## Physical Description 2

Richmond Park is situated at the eastern edge of Richmond, adjacent to the Yarra River. Bisected by two railways and Swan Street and Madden Grove, and bounded by Yarra Boulevard it comprises informal parklands and sporting ovals set within mature trees, including both remnant riparian vegetation and introduced native and exotic species.

This description of Richmond Park excludes the former Burnley Horticulture College, which is included on the Victorian Heritage Register (please refer to the VHR citation for a description), the modern office park on the south side of Swan Street and the former High School, which are not included within HO299.

Richmond Park may be broadly divided into two sections, to the north and south of Swan Street.

The northern section (Burnley Park)

The northern section contains three distinct sub-areas: the 'Circus Site' between Swan Street and the Hawthorn railway; the area to the north of the railway containing the Burnley Oval and parklands and also known as 'Burnley Park'; and the Yarra Boulevard and its immediate environs.

The 'Circus Site' is open parkland containing several mature Eucalypts including a River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), a Sugar Gum (*E. cladocalyx*), and a specimen of *E. cornuta* (a West Australian species), all of which are included on the Significant Tree Register.

The area to the north of the railway and known as 'Burnley Park' contains the Burnley Oval and informal parklands to the north. Notable features within this area include:

- . The dead River Red Gum (known as the 'Corroboree Tree'), associated with the Wurundjeri Aboriginal group adjacent to Burnley Oval.

- . The former nineteenth century park-keeper's cottage. This is an altered timber cottage situated to the north of Burnley Oval.

- . The remnants of the nineteenth century Dutch Elm (*Ulmus x hollandica*) avenue leading from Bridge Road. Mature trees that may form part of the original avenue, or represent early replanting in the twentieth century include a line of six parallel to the west boundary between Campbell and Park streets, two more in the road reserve adjacent to Yarra Boulevard, and several more adjacent to the path that passes the former park-keeper's cottage.

- . The pathway along the western edge leading from Yarra Boulevard to Park Grove. This is believed to be associated with landscaping works carried out in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and includes some mature plantings including pines and conifers.

- . Remnants of pre-1945 planting schemes including the Canary Island Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) adjacent to the former park-keeper's cottage, Sugar Gums surrounding the Burnley Oval, and the notable group of palms at the corner of Swan Street and Park Grove that include six Canary Island Palms and one Mexican Fan (*Washingtonia robusta*) Palm.

The landscaping associated with Yarra Boulevard comprises two distinct sections. The southern section from Swan Street to beginning of the north-south section leading to Bridge Road is characterised by informal terraced gardens edged in lava rocks. Remnants of original or early plantings include succulents, palms (Canary Island and Washingtonia) and Sugar Gums. An Osage Orange (*Maclura pomifera*), situated within the area to the north-east of the connection of Yarra Boulevard to Swan Street is listed on the Significant Tree Register. Recently, sections of the gardens have been re-planted using succulents. Part of what may be an interwar angled rail timber fence survives on the southwest side (there are numerous references during the interwar period to the construction of this type of fence with the distinctive angled top rail throughout Richmond Park).

Recent structures within the northern section include the sporting pavilion and playground to the north of the Burnley Oval. Most of the park furniture (seats etc.) also appear to be recent or of post-1945 date.

The north-south section of Yarra Boulevard (generally between Melbourne Girls' High School and Park Avenue) is distinguished by the use of more formal hard landscaping including low rock walls and planters, which were constructed at the behest of the City of Richmond's Parks & Gardens Committee to protect the roots of the Dutch Elm avenue. Rock retaining walls line the western side of Yarra Boulevard, while the pathway running parallel to the road on the eastern side is framed by low rock walls and planters, particularly in the section adjacent to Park Avenue. The walls are punctuated by openings with 'crazy paving' steps leading down to the road. The intersection with Bridge Road is framed by curved stone walls, and there are bluestone steps on the east side leading down to the river. As noted above, the section contains some mature Dutch Elms, some of which are part of the nineteenth century avenue (and some are twentieth century replacements). Other trees include Cedars (

*Cedrus sp.*) and palms including a Canary Island Palm adjacent to Park Avenue, and two Chinese Windmill Palms (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) at the west corner of Bridge Road. Shrubs that may be remnants of the original planting scheme include common Privet, Agapanthus, Cordylines, and New Zealand Christmas Bush.

The landscaped area on the west side adjacent to the north end of Park Avenue also contains a small stone memorial to James Scullin, who lived at 6 Park Avenue from 1929 to 1931.

The southern section

The southern section contains three distinct areas: the golf course, the Kevin Bartlett Reserve and the Yarra Boulevard.

The golf course contains several remnant River Red Gums, as well as a number of large Sugar Gums, and there are further specimens of each tree within the adjacent The Kevin Bartlett Reserve that contains several sporting ovals and pavilions dating from post-1945.

As a result of its c.1969 realignment the section of Yarra Boulevard to the south of Kevin Bartlett Reserve and the Golf Course retains little of its inter-war character. The eastern section on the other hand is framed by some mature exotic trees including Elms (*Ulmus sp.*) and Ash (*Fraxinus sp.*).

#### *Potential Threats*

The assessment carried out in 1998 for the *City of Yarra Heritage Review* noted:

The site in certain areas is derelict, particularly the shrubberies along The (Yarra) Boulevard. Further degeneration of these plantings will impact significantly on the heritage value of the site, particularly the failure to replace senescent specimens with the same species. Further introduction of inappropriately detailed constructed elements, particularly in relation to sporting facilities, which will further challenge the heritage character of the area.

Since that time some works have been carried out to repair and restore parts of Yarra Boulevard and replanting of the missing sections of the Dutch Elm Avenue have been completed. However, many of the shrubberies in the northern section of Yarra Boulevard remain overgrown and some of the retaining walls are in poor condition and have partially collapsed.

#### *Management*

The assessment carried out in 1998 for the *City of Yarra Heritage Review* recommended:

The site requires the preparation of a detailed master plan and management policy that should attempt to unify the various disparate elements throughout the extensive site, and reinforce the heritage character of the place. The plan should address maintenance and replacement strategies for vegetation, and appropriate conservation of hard landscaping. It should seek to encourage increased use of the site as a passive recreational area.

This recommendation is still relevant.

*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/>*