
Balwyn Road Residential Precinct

Municipality

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO264

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - November 27, 2008

HO264 Balwyn Road Residential Precinct, Canterbury

Reference - *Balwyn Road Residential Precinct, Canterbury: Stage 2 Heritage Precinct Review* (August 2006)

The Balwyn Road Residential Precinct is of historic significance because the pattern of development reflects that of Boroondara generally. In much of Boroondara one or two periods might be represented in any one precinct, however in the Balwyn Road Residential Precinct all periods are nearly equally represented. As such, the precinct is a microcosm of the broad sweep of development across the City. The relative consistency in the allotment width and/or size across the different phases of development serves to unify the precinct.

There are historical associations with several eminent families (Danks, Goldings, Marfleets, McAlpins, etc). Of further interest is the profile that some residents have had at a broader level (either State, national or international) and the manifold connections between various residents within the precinct and the City of Boroondara.

The Balwyn Road Residential Precinct is of aesthetic significance for the many high quality buildings, some of which are of individual significance at the broader level, and others that are generally good examples of their architectural style. The buildings are remarkably intact to their period of construction and have been well maintained. There has been limited change of building stock. A high proportion of the buildings have been architect designed. Although there are a range of styles evident, there is a consistency in scale and setbacks.

The extensive and well maintained landscaping both to the street (with trees and wide reservations) and the private gardens provides a level of cohesion. One of the gardens (no. 17) is a rare example of a late nineteenth century intact suburban garden. In addition, some of the early road and paving infrastructure is intact.

Hermes Number 112126

Property Number

Integrity

3.1 Extent

The Balwyn Road Residential Precinct includes all the sites on Balwyn Road between Canterbury Road to the south and Mont Albert Road to the north, excluding the commercial building on the south-east corner of Canterbury Road. All the sites front Balwyn Road except for the one at the north-west corner, which has a street address of 168A Mont Albert Road.

3.2 General

The land generally slopes from the north-west to south-east. The sites at the northern end on the west side of the street are relatively flat but most of the others sites have a slope, and often have views, more so to the east side of Balwyn Road. The sites are generally deeper to the east side. The size of the allotments vary (about 500 m² to 4700m²), most however are in the order of 1000 m².

3.3 Residents

Throughout the post-contact history of the Precinct, the houses have generally been owner occupied, although a few have initially been built as investment properties.⁴² The period of ownership has commonly been lengthy. Some sites have remained in the one family's ownership for a few generations and in other instances, some existing resident's children have bought property in the Balwyn Road precinct.

Because of the often long history of certain families in the Precinct, the sense of community has been strong, as evidenced by the support (especially financial) of the religious foundations in this part of Balwyn Road by local residents. Support by some local residents has extended more broadly throughout the City of Boroondara. Some residents have served on the local council (eg George Mercy [no.8] and John Maling [no.13]) or have been employed by the council (eg Andrew Duncan [no.9]).

3.4 Buildings

The buildings are mostly residential, the principal exceptions being two churches to the south end on the west side (nos. 1a + 15a). One other building (no.3) previously operated as a school, but has been used as a house for many years. Two other buildings have been used for accommodation on a broader scale - no.14 was converted to a nursing home during the late 1960s and no.16 was used as St Johns Boys Home for about 75 years but has recently been returned to a private house.

Most of the buildings are visible in part from the road. Two sites on the east side (8A and 28A), which are the result of subdivisions in recent decades, have limited street presence as the respective houses are set back to the rear of the adjoining properties.

The buildings are either single storey, several with an attic level, or two storeys. Some have rear additions but these are largely hidden from the street. The buildings are generally well setback from the street, and are mostly free standing residences. There are only two multi-unit developments within the precinct of recent origin.

The buildings are predominantly constructed from brick, either face brick or rendered or a combination of both. There are a three weatherboard houses of late 19th century origin. The roofs are hipped and/or gabled and mostly clad in terracotta tiles. The principal exception being slate and corrugated sheet metal roofing to a few late 19th century houses.

Of the 46 sites in the Balwyn Road Residential Precinct, there is a near even spread of buildings to the key phases of development: Victorian (circa 1860-1900), Federation or Edwardian (early 20th century), Interwar

period (1920s-30s) and post-WWII (1950s to the present). There are also two examples of the less common, Transitional style (mixture of Victorian and Federation period detailing) at nos. 9 and 30. In summary, buildings from the various periods are recognizable by the following:

• Victorian period: rendered brick or weatherboard, hip roofs clad in slate or corrugated sheet metal, and cast iron detailing,

• Federation or Edwardian period: red brick and some sections of rendered walls, terracotta clad picturesque roofs with gable ends with half-timbering and decorative ridge detailing, and timber verandahs.

• Interwar period: combination of wall materials with clinker brick, roofs clad in tiles, attic levels, and casement windows, some with lead lighting.

• Post-WWII: walls of cream, orange or brown bricks, simple roof forms, and a general lack of decoration.

There are distinctive examples from all the periods, many of which have been designed by architects. Among the notable architects who have worked at sites in the precinct are John Flanagan (no.16), H M and R M King (nos. 21 + 35), Marcus Martin (no.32), Lionel San Miguel (168A Mont Albert Rd), Arthur Plaisted (nos. 12 + 14), Ussher & Kemp (no.1 and possibly no.27), John Wardle & Assoc. (nos. 15 + 26), Louis Williams (no.15A) and William Wolf (no.16). The distinctiveness of a number of other houses within the precinct suggests they were also architect designed.

3.5 Landscaping

The Balwyn Road Residential Precinct is a verdant strip and the landscaping provides a distinctive character, which has been identified as being English-like.⁴³ Mature oak and elm trees line Balwyn Road and provide an extensive canopy. This canopy is generally augmented over the footpath by the canopies of trees or large shrubs in the front gardens of many properties. The gardens frequently consist of well-established exotic plantings to the extent that several houses are partially obscured from the street. An individually significant private garden is that of no. 17, which retains some fabric and the general layout of its original 19th century form.

A range of front fences are evident. There are some original front fences from the first half of the 20th century, commonly low and constructed in brick. A more recent trend has been to build high fences, many in brick, especially at the southern end of Balwyn Road.

3.6 Infrastructure

Balwyn Road is a secondary arterial road with an asphalt surfaced carriageway. The side grassed reservations are wide but narrow at the south-west end in front of the Baptist Church, where some recessed parking is provided.

Originally the kerbing had been red gum,⁴⁴ however the current kerbing and channeling is a combination of earlier sections of basalt, with sections of modern concrete. Some sections of the earlier basalt channeling - the channel between the footpath and nature strip and the run-off channels extending to the gutter (for example in the vicinity of *Shrublands*) - are also evident. Most of the earlier basalt channeling to the roadside, which is exposed in part, is probably intact below the asphalt of Balwyn Road. The crossovers are constructed either in asphalt or concrete.

3.7 Integrity

The extant building stock is generally original although there are some replacement buildings. The buildings are well-maintained and remarkably intact to their period of construction. The additions that have been undertaken thus far have generally been set well back from the street, are only partially visible, and have been handled in a sympathetic manner.

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.

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