
Great Western Road

Location

Aberdeen, Potter Bendigo, McNicol and Villamanta Geelong West, GREATER GEELONG CITY

Municipality

GREATER GEELONG CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO1959

Heritage Listing

Greater Geelong City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Statement of Significance - LOCAL Significance

The Great Western Road Heritage Precinct has significance as a physical legacy of building development lining Aberdeen Street, an important historic thoroughfare, from three important eras: 19th century, Federation era and interwar period. The dwellings are largely single storey and constructed in Edwardian and Federation, and interwar Bungalow styles. There is a lesser (but no less important) number of Victorian dwellings that reflect the earliest developments in the area, as well as some notable Victorian and Federation era dwellings that are atypical in scale and construction to most of the buildings. Aberdeen Street was laid out as the Great Western Road as part of the initial survey of the Town of Geelong in 1838 and its elevated status as a major transport route through Geelong to the western goldfields was marked in the mid 1850s after the opening of a bridge at Fyansford. Most of the land was developed after 1889 when James Austin and other landholders sold their landholdings into smaller residential allotments. These late 19th century subdivisions included the layout of some minor thoroughfares such as McNicol and Potter Streets. The most profound development on the northern side of Aberdeen Street did not occur until the Federation era, when a sizeable number of the dwellings in the area were constructed. A local landmark is the former Argyle Hotel, built in 1855 and which reflects the elevated importance of Aberdeen Street from the mid 19th century as a transport route. It is also a tangible legacy of the original home of the Geelong Football Club, whose ground (Argyle Ground) was located to its west between 1860 and 1878.

The Great Western Road Heritage Precinct is aesthetically and architecturally significant at a LOCAL level (AHC D.2). It demonstrates original and early design qualities of three important development eras: 19th century, Federation era and interwar period. These predominantly intact and detached, single storey, timber weatherboard, Victorian, Edwardian, Federation and interwar Bungalow styled dwellings have hipped and/or gabled roof forms, front or return verandahs (with posts and details relating to the three developmental eras), face or rendered brick chimneys, corrugated sheet metal roof cladding, timber framed, double hung windows, arranged singularly, in pairs, tripartite openings or as projecting bays, and decorative infill in the gable ends. Within the precinct are a select number of buildings that are atypical in scale and construction to most of the dwellings, but which also contribute to the architectural significance of the area. These include the commercial buildings built in the 19th century: former Argyle Hotel at 30 Aberdeen Street, two storey building at 148 Aberdeen Street, and the two storey Bottles and Barrels building (former Hooper's Grocery store) at 132 Aberdeen Street; and the interwar era shops: situated at 56 and 146 Aberdeen Street. The significant atypical dwellings include Federation styled "Mapphyla" at 6 Aberdeen Street and the interwar era dwelling at 40 Aberdeen Street. The significance of the area is also defined by the surviving early engineering infrastructure, including the asphalt finish to the footpaths, bluestone kerb and channel and the bluestone spoon drains in Potter Street.

The Great Western Road Precinct is historically significant at a LOCAL level (AHC A.4, H.1). It is especially associated with residential building development along the northern side of Aberdeen Street during the Federation era (1900-1919), but it also has associations with buildings constructed in the 19th century and interwar (1920-1945 period). The earliest buildings in Aberdeen Street are a physical legacy of commercial progress in the mid 1850s, when Great Western Road (as Aberdeen Street was originally known after it had been laid out as part of a Government survey in 1838) increased in importance as a major transport route through Geelong to the western goldfields. This resulted because of the construction of a bridge at Fyansford. The area also has associations with some early wealthy landowners, including James Austin and Silas Harding. They jointly leased part of their land west of the Argyle Hotel (built in 1855) as a football ground known as the Argyle Grounds. This ground was the original home of the Geelong Football Club where the earliest local Australian Rules Football matches occurred between Geelong and Melbourne metropolitan teams between 1860 and 1878. It was a consequence of land sales by Austin from 1889 that led to the most profound residential development in the area during the Federation era. Other land sales followed in the ensuing years. A select number of the Federation era dwellings were designed by the prolific Geelong architectural firm of Laird and Buchan (earlier known as Laird and Barlow).

Overall, the Great Western Road Precinct is of LOCAL significance.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Greater Geelong - Ashby Heritage Review, D Rowe and W Jacobs, 2010;
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Hermes Number	119444
Property Number	

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/>