
Humffray Street Heritage Precinct



HUMFFRAY STREET
HERITAGE PRECINCT

Municipality

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO175

Heritage Listing

Ballarat City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The Humffray Street Precinct is **historically** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criterion A and H.1).

- (a) the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history;
- (a3) importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of built landscapes and cultural features;
- (a4) & (h1) importance for association with events, developments, cultural phases and individuals which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the region.

The Precinct is associated with the early track, Humffray Street, the main access route that followed the Yarrowee River to the major alluvial gold finds near Black Hill and the northern-eastern section of Eureka Lead at Brown Hill, later known as Little Bendigo.

The Precinct is also of historical importance for its association with the rich quartz and open cut company mining at Black Hill, which was first exploited by a group of French miners, and the environmental degradation of the Yarrowee River and flats that followed. The environmental impact of the mining in this area had major repercussions with sludge, debris that contaminated dams and polluted water, causing havoc with flash flooding down stream. Water Boards were set up early in 1860s to provide safe and secure water supplies, and to reduce the high rates of diseases. Major engineering infrastructure projects were undertaken to control water courses. It included the construction of a vast network of bluestone and brick channels, storm water drains as well as bluestone, kerbs and deep gutters that are a vital part of Ballarat's heritage. The northern section of the Precinct (in the general area now bounded by Princes, Morres and Newman Streets) is historical important as an example of environmentally degraded mining wasteland land that was only reclaimed recently for the construction of Housing Commission houses in the 1950s, while other areas along the Yarrowee River channel remain vacant.

The Precinct is also of historical significance for its association with early recreational activities held in Ballarat, particularly at Eastern Oval which became the home of the Ballarat Cricket Club in the mid-1850s, and the headquarters of the Ballarat Bowling Club in the mid-1860s. The Yarrowee Creek that runs around the oval is an important example of early timber lined canalization project in 1860s which was later upgraded with bluestone in 1880s.

The Humffray Street/Ballararat East Precinct is **architecturally** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criteria D.2, E.1).

(d) its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's Cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's cultural environments (including way of life, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique);

(e) its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.

The Precinct demonstrates many original and intact design qualities associated with the residential, educational, and cultural/community development of this early mining area of East Ballarat between the 1860s and the 1940s.

The particular mining character of this area is important to Ballarat as it retains the atmosphere of an early mining settlement more strongly than elsewhere. By the late 1850s Humffray Street had progressed from a rough bullock-dray track following the ridge line above Yarrowee River to a wide thoroughfare fronted with houses and the occasional store and hotel. The urban consolidation of the 1860s was based on a town layout plan prepared by the town surveyor John Curruthers. By 1880s the area included a mixed collection of housing, hotels, industry such as brick kilns and tanneries, shops, schools and a Female Refuge, and associated Alexander Steam Laundry and Alexander Babies Home. There are several notable Churches; the Primitive Methodist Church designed by J.A Doane (1860 2) the Bible Christian Church designed by carpenter S. H. Lugg, (1867) and Methodist Brown Hill Church, designed by J.A Doane (1869).

The built form and urban appearance of Humffray Street is important as it still retains the organic form of an unplanned commercial thoroughfare, typical of many ephemeral 19th century mining settlement, featuring long winding roads and closed vistas. These particular historic streetscape qualities are created by commercial buildings with post verandahs located at street corners interspersed by a diverse collection of largely 19th century modest vernacular timber weatherboard cottages. Many of the rear lanes and side streets remain undeveloped, others contain evidence of very small early miners cottages.

Despite the quite varied residential allotment sizes and widths, the Precinct is architecturally important for its high numbers of substantially intact examples of small scale Victorian, Edwardian and Inter War style cottages and villas set in mature gardens. The subdivision pattern varies considerably with local streets of varying widths in the western sector of the Precinct, which also contains the smallest allotment sizes and dense small scale residential development, characterized by predominately single-storey timber weatherboard cottages.

The Humffray Street/Ballararat East Precinct is **aesthetically** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criteria D.2, E.1).

(d) its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's Cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's cultural environments (including way of life, custom, process, land-use, function, design or technique);

(e) its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group.

The Precinct demonstrates important visual qualities that reflect the historical, cultural and architectural development of the Precinct, that contribute to its historic mining landscape setting. These qualities include the complex views across and through the Precinct to other parts of Ballarat including north to Black Hill. Other important aesthetic qualities include a variety of significant urban landmarks, a number of which can be seen from outside of the Precinct. These include but are not limited to the Brown Hill Uniting Church, the Eastern Oval reserve with its notable grandstand and mature trees including the W.G.Grace Dutch Elm, the former Eastern Station Hotel and various commercial and cultural/community buildings along Humffray Street North as well as the former Ballarat Female Refuge and former Alexandra Babies Home in Scotts Parade. Exotic trees such as mature Corsican and Monterey Pines mature oaks and other pines dominate many views, which together with a number of grassy ovals provide an open recreational landscape focus within residential surroundings.

The important visual qualities of the Precinct are also enhanced by the gravel/grass road shoulders and turf nature strips or footpaths; by the stretches of unmade roads; and by private gardens with mature canopy trees. Together with the various treed and landscaped reserves they provide the Precinct with a less urbanised setting of considerable variety. Furthermore, the visual qualities of the precinct are specially enhanced by the retention of much of its original engineering infrastructure, particularly as identified by the numerous stretches of bluestone or brick spoon drains, and bluestone or brick kerbing and channel gutters

The Humffray Street/Ballararat East Precinct is **scientifically** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criterion C.2 and F).

(c) its potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history;
(f) importance for its technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement.

The Precinct is of importance for contributing to our knowledge of the infrastructure development of East Ballarat associated with efforts to minimize the environmental degradation caused by mining operations. This is evidenced by intact stretches of bluestone and brick spoon drains, kerbing and channel gutters, and stormwater drainage channel with its unusual cast-iron pipe culvert. Furthermore the precinct contains highly significant specimens of Tasmanian Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus subsp. globulus*) and Corsican Pine (*Pinus nigra var. corsicana*). There is also a notable specimen of a Dutch Elm (*Ulmus x hollandica*) that is also on the Significant Tree Register.

The Humffray Street/Ballararat East Precinct is **socially** significant at a **LOCAL** level (AHC criterion G.1).

(g) the place's strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.

The Precinct is recognized and highly valued by the local community for residential, religious, and recreational reasons.

Hermes Number 140652

Property Number

Physical Description 1

The Humffray Street Precinct is located to the north-east of the Ballarat City centre, within urban Ballarat. It is characterised by a heterogeneous combination of substantially intact, single storey, detached residential buildings constructed from around the 1860s to the 1940s and interspersed with a small number of commercial and cultural/community buildings constructed from the 1860s onwards. A small number of the residences also feature attached shops. The precinct is also characterised by the street tree plantings along many of the streets, including Humffray Street North, by areas of grassed and landscaped public and private open space including Eastern Oval, Russell Square, the reserve between Scotts Parade and the railway line, and a number of mature

trees in private gardens. Furthermore, the precinct is distinguished by the retention of much of its original engineering infrastructure, particularly as identified by the numerous stretches of bluestone or brick spoon drains, and bluestone or brick kerbing and channel gutters.

Humffray Street North Precinct forms an important east-west axis down the centre of much of the Humffray Street North/Ballarat East Precinct and is one of the main north-eastern entries into Ballarat. The east boundary is effectively the narrowest part of the precinct and is formed along the outer boundaries of the easternmost allotments on the corner of Humffray Street North and Thompson Street. The south boundary runs from this intersection for a short distance to Haines Street generally along the rear boundaries of the allotments facing Humffray Street North. The remainder of the south boundary, from the east side of Haines Street to the west boundary, is formed by the edge of the Railway reserve, which is marked in parts by a high fence and is located adjacent to the wide landscaped reserve on the south side of Scotts Parade.

The west boundary of the Humffray Street North Precinct is bounded by the Yarrowee River Channel, which curves around the Eastern Oval and forms part of the north boundary of the precinct until just east of Princes Street, where it becomes the Yarrowee River. From this point the north boundary then takes a staggered line eastwards. Between the rear boundaries of the allotments on the east side of Princes Street and Stawell Street this boundary generally runs along the north side of Morres Street, with an indentation to the north side of Finch Street between Newman and Queen Street, and a staggered extension to the junction of Oliver Street with the Yarrowee River between Queen and Rice Streets. Between Stawell Street and the east boundary, the north boundary runs along the north edge of the last stretch of Morres Street, and then generally along the rear boundaries of the allotments on the north side of Humffray Street North.

Humffray Street was formerly an early established bullock track but was once the main entry into Ballarat in the 1850's and 1860's. The precinct runs parallel to the railway line and the Yarrowee River channel and extends from near the Eastern Oval to the corner of Humffray and Thompson Streets. The precinct includes a mixture of commercial, cultural, educational and recreational places.

Parts of Humffray Street precinct was first surveyed by the government surveyor in the 1850's. Sections were subdivided into residential lots by Government and private subdivision. The layout of the regular lots reflects area surveyed by the government. The irregular shaped lots were in the areas where Miners Rights leases dominated.

The precinct is important as it contains many original and early examples of Victorian, Federation and Interwar residential, educational, community and cultural buildings. The residential buildings are typically one storey in height with hipped and /or gabled roofs, mostly clad in corrugated galvanised iron. They are predominantly made of horizontal weatherboard, occasionally brick, with either polychromatic or unpainted brick chimneys and verandahs. Other features are decorative detailing, timber doors and timber framed double hung or casement windows. The commercial and cultural/community buildings are typified by their domestic scale and one or two storey height, clad with galvanised corrugated iron or Marseilles pattern terra cotta tiles, horizontal weatherboards or brick walls, parapeted facades, timber doors and windows and decorative detailing.

Some of the key landmark buildings include the Brown Hill Uniting Church, the Eastern Oval Reserve and grandstand, the former Eastern Station Hotel, smaller shops along Humffray Street, the former Ballarat Female Refuge and former Alexandra Babies Home and the Greek Orthodox Church Hall. Also visually important are the significant mature trees in the precinct.

Other features of the precinct are the grass/gravel road shoulders and turf nature strips, open landscaped or treed reserves and stretches of unmade road, combine to provide a less urbanised setting. The retention of much of the original bluestone or brick spoon drains and bluestone or brick kerb and channelling is also a feature.

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/>