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# Waller Estate Heritage Precinct



WALLER ESTATE  
HERITAGE PRECINCT

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## Municipality

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO169

## Heritage Listing

Ballarat City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The Waller Estate Precinct is **historically** significant at a **Local** level. (AHC criteria A.4 and H.1).

*(a) the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history;*

*(a)4 importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, State, region or community;*

*(h) the place's special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history.*

The Precinct is important for its association with mining activity during the mid-1860s to the early 1900s. Mines in this area exploited tributaries of the nearby Inkerman Lead, with the West Don Shaft and Leviathan Shaft. The Leviathan Company was formed in the late 1850s and operated until being forced to close down its operations due to a lawsuit by a neighbouring company. The Precinct stands on land that was mostly undeveloped for residential purposes until after World War II. Its subsequent development illustrates a typical pattern of residential infill development that was common in Ballarat.

The Precinct is historically significant as the earliest and most intact example in Ballarat of an entrepreneurial private property development that had begun to become popular in post war Australia. The development of the Waller Estate occurred at a time of severe housing shortage in Australia after World War II and is comparable with similar contemporary projects undertaken by companies such as A V Jennings that radically changed the pattern of residential development in Australia. The Waller Estate is a forerunner of the modern housing estate development that is now common in Ballarat.

The 1950 Waller Estate subdivision is an important local example, albeit on a small scale, and is essentially unchanged from when the original subdivision plan LP20105, was formally lodged in June 1950. The original appearance and character of the houses that were predominantly constructed by the developer/builder Roy Waller and his Ballarat based Waller Syndicate from 1945 to 1961 remains substantially intact.

The Waller Estate Precinct is **architecturally** significant at a **Local** level (AHC criteria D.2, E.1).

*(d) the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments; (e) the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;*

There are two major aspects of the Waller Estate Precinct that are of aesthetic, architectural and historical significance within the wider context of Ballarat: The basic town planning principles underpinning the subdivision's layout, which was notably developed by a private syndicate, and the consistency of both the form and style of the residential buildings.

The distinctive layout of the inner roads of the Waller Estate is based on typical 1950s town planning principles, and includes a curvilinear layout created by avenues, crescents and cul-de-sacs that catered for the motor car as a primary means of transport. The development established within the surrounding rigid grid street pattern demonstrates a notable departure from the neo-classical 19th century town planning principles of early Ballarat.

The physical attributes of the Waller Estate express the values of the Waller Syndicate. This included the promotion and sale of a variety of quality modern Post- War Suburban houses designed by John Muir, of Muir and Shepherd Architects. By 1950 contemporary critics regarded the Waller Estate as a significant housing venture in the City of Ballarat.

The Precinct is important for its coherent architectural form and the high concentration of detached double or triple fronted brick veneer residences with terracotta tile or corrugated asbestos cement sheet roofs built between 1941 and 1961. The design is distinctively post-World War II and stands in contrast to the mix of timber and brick Victorian, Federation and Inter-War style housing of the neighbourhood. Other important design features include wide front and side setbacks; and single storey face brick construction, and a notable range of low front fences,

particularly those constructed of brick with wrought iron panels, as well as single rear brick garages located at the end of side driveways.

The Waller Estate Precinct is **aesthetically** significant at a **Local** level. (AHC criteria D.2, E.1).

*(d) the place's importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments; (e) the place's importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;*

The Waller Estate heritage Precinct is important for its ability to demonstrate distinctive aesthetic ideas with an eclectic amalgam of traditional and modern design elements and materials which were highly regarded at the time. This is expressed visually by the substantially intact 1950s-1960s architecture and urban design layout that contains substantial public open space in Waller Avenue and for the picturesque curvilinear street pattern. This adds visual interest to the streetscape and, was intended to demonstrate to potential clients that the Estate was 'modern' and 'attractive', both sought-after characteristics in the post-war era.

Hermes Number 156829

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

The Waller Estate Precinct is characterised by a built up, single storey, residential area that was predominantly constructed by the developer/builder Roy Waller and his Syndicate from 1945 to 1961 on empty allotments of land bounded by Inkerman, Pleasant, Winter and Russell Streets. There is one former commercial building in the precinct, a shop with an attached residence, also built by the Waller Syndicate.

The present street and allotment layout in this precinct is essentially unchanged from the original subdivision plan LP20105, which was formally lodged in June 1950. The precinct takes up almost all of this original subdivision plan except for the block bounded by Inkerman Street, Waller Avenue, Gwenith Avenue and Russell Street (where a school is now located), and the stretch of allotments facing Russell Street between Gwenith Avenue and Jessie Street. The precinct is located on the southwestern edge of inner urban Ballarat.

The Waller Estate Precinct is characterised by a single storey residential area that was predominantly constructed by the developer/builder Roy Waller and his Syndicate from 1945 to 1961 on empty allotments of land bounded by Inkerman, Pleasant, Winter and Russell Streets.

These four roads were laid out in the 19th century as part of the dominant north-south and east-west grid pattern of Ballarat West. The present distinctive street layout within the boundaries of these long-established roads was an initiative of the Waller Syndicate, a consortium of builders and real estate agents led by Mr. Roy Waller, and forms part of a 1950 subdivision called the Waller Estate. The majority of houses within the Waller Estate were built by the Syndicate in a concentrated period of activity between 1949 and 1961 and appear to have been predominantly offered for sale as 'spec' homes on completion.

Mining occurred throughout the precinct during the mid-1860s to the early 1900s. Mines in this area exploited tributaries of the nearby Inkerman Lead, with the West Don Shaft and Leviathan Shaft most closely associated with this area. Today, the Waller Estate Precinct contains no evidence of this early mining activity.

The Waller Estate Precinct is historically significant as the earliest example in Ballarat of the type of entrepreneurial private property development that began to take hold in post war Australia. The syndicate use of avenues, crescents and cul-desacs to form a predominantly curvilinear layout within the established grid pattern of the surrounding roads demonstrates a notable departure from the town planning principles previously used in Ballarat.

The Waller Precinct is architecturally significant as it demonstrates many original and early design qualities associated with the residential development of the Waller subdivision from the mid-1940s to the early 1960s. The buildings within the subdivision are a consistent Post-War Suburban architectural style. The important design qualities which contribute to the significance of the precinct include detached siting within the allotments, front setbacks of generally 5-10 metres and side setbacks generally ranging from 1.5-6 metres, single storey height, brick construction, low front fences; and the single brick garages located at the end of side driveway.

The Waller precinct is significant aesthetically for having a range of narrowed views along the inner curving and straight roads, and into the cul-de-sacs, that reinforce the distinctive layout of these roads in contrast to the dominant grid street pattern beyond. The unobstructed views emphasise the consistency of both form and style of residential buildings within the precinct. The open views across the private gardens in conjunction with the well maintained nature strips, street plantings and central garden reserve in Waller Avenue are of importance for the contribution that they make to the garden like setting of the precinct.

*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/>*