
55 Wellington St



CREMORNE WELLINGTON
STREET 55.jpg

Location

55 WELLINGTON STREET, CREMORNE VIC 3121 - Property No 166150

Municipality

YARRA CITY

Level of significance

Rec for HO area contributory

Heritage Overlay Numbers

Heritage Listing

Yarra City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

Precinct statement of significance:

What is significant?

Historical background

In 1839, two years after the first land sales in the township reserve of Melbourne, Crown allotments were auctioned in Richmond, Fitzroy and Collingwood. These allotments were mainly intended for development as

farmlets. However many of the purchases in Richmond were speculative for, very soon, allotments were subdivided and advertised for sale in the ``Port Phillip Patriot''. The first was William Wilton's Crown allotment 46 which was to be sold in one or more acre lots. In 1840, at a subdivision sale of Dr. Farquhar McCrae's allotment 24, the auctioneer described Richmond as ".the abode of aristocracy, wealthy and retired opulence." and 36 half-acre blocks were sold.

This was the boom period leading up to the recession of the early 1840s. As a sign of the times, subdivisions on the Richmond flats were advertised in 1842 as ".well deserving public attention among the working class", in contrast to earlier advertising of the higher parts of Richmond as for gentlemen only.

By the mid 1840s the depression had ended and resumption of the Immigration Act resulted in a new influx of workers. The sale of Crown allotments recommenced in Richmond in 1845 and by 1851 a further fifteen Crown Portions were sold. Reserves were also created for police purposes (Crown allotments 13-15), and for churches, recreation, produce market, schools and a mechanics' institute (Crown allotment 35). Thirty-one quarry sites were set aside on Crown allotments 9 to 15 where they abutted the river. The only other clay pits shown are at the locality of Yarraberg which David Mitchell operated in Crown Portion 42, off Burnley St.

Richmond's population in 1846 was 4029. At this time, Fitzroy and Collingwood were also being rapidly subdivided, St. Kilda and Port Melbourne were fashionable picnic spots and Williamstown a busy port. The village at Brighton was the leading pleasure resort, and Heidelberg a prosperous farming community. East Melbourne was little built upon until after 1848 when Bishop Perry chose a site there for the Anglican Bishop's Palace. This gave an impetus to building and the Richmond area went ahead as a select and convenient one in which to live. In 1852 North Melbourne, St. Kilda, South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, Essendon, Remington, Carlton and Hawthorn were laid out. Melbourne's population had trebled by 1853 with people returning from the goldfields, while in Richmond major residential subdivisions had occurred in the north and west. Within the next four years, men who established their suburban villas on the Richmond hills included senior Government officials, Alexander McCrae and William Hull; newspaper proprietors Thomas Strode, George Cavanaugh and George Arden; merchants Patrick Welsh, David Stodart Campbell and Alfred Woolley; and the bankers William Highett and John Gardiner. Their ".comfortable, if not architecturally stylish villas began to dot the place".

Richmond was created a separate municipality in 1855. The survey maps of Magee and Kearney show that at this time many of the existing major streets had been laid out but that almost all buildings, with the exception of those in the Yarraberg area to the northeast, were concentrated in the western half of Richmond, near to Melbourne town and the railway route: large suburban villas and gardens on the hill, and cottages on small blocks in the north and south, often in areas of relatively intense development isolated to individual streets. The factors influencing the location of the earliest development appear to have been a preference for high ground and a position on government roads, especially at cross roads.

Richmond's population in 1857 was 9,029 with 2,161 houses and five architects. The electors' roll for 1856-7 indicates an established retail and service trade in Swan Street and Bridge Road - butchers, drapers, shoemakers, hotels, fruiterers, tailors, hairdressers, grocers and blacksmiths.

With separation from Melbourne in 1855, Richmond, along with Collingwood, became exempt from the `Melbourne Building Act' of 1849 which controlled building and subdivision standards. Developers were free to plan streets, reduce frontages and build what they liked. Closer development of Richmond was also encouraged by the railway which was extended to Brighton from Melbourne by 1859, and by horse drawn omnibuses which connected Richmond with Melbourne along Bridge Road.

Melbourne's population in 1861 was 37,000 (including Carlton and East Melbourne); Richmond, Collingwood and Fitzroy each had about 12,000, Prahran 10,000, South Melbourne 9,000, North Melbourne 7,000 and St. Kilda 6,000. Development was apparent along Punt Road c.1860, with little development in south-east Richmond was in 1869. Unemployment was a major issue during the 1860s and in 1862 the Richmond Council sought the repeal of the `Yarra Pollution Prevention Act 'of 1855 (which forbade fellmongeries, starch and glue factories, and boiling down works discharging waste into the Yarra River upstream from Melbourne) so that the river frontages could be opened to manufacturing. By 1865 a quarry, stone crushing mill, fellmongery and abattoir had been established on the river flats in Burnley, and by the 1870's a panoramic view of Richmond carried the caption 'Industry in Arcady'.

As with Melbourne and its other suburbs, the most active period of development in Richmond was in the 1870s and 1880s. The eastern half of the town was partly subdivided by 1874 and by 1888 most subdivision patterns

were complete, the major exception being Cole's paddock on Victoria Street. Richmond was proclaimed a town in 1872 and a city in 1882. Its population in 1880 was 23,395 and in 1890 it was 38,797. The residential development trend was a marked increase from the 1850s, steeply rising until c1881 and then a plateau into the 1890s Great Depression. The rate books list 52 industrial establishments in 1880.

Houses constructed between Federation and World War One make up a substantial proportion of Richmond's building stock particularly in the eastern half of the city. Cole's paddock was subdivided by this time.

Encouraged by high tariff protection, new factories and stores were also being established, most notably Bryant & May, Wertheim's piano factory, Dimmey's Model Store, Ruwolt, Rosella, Moore Paragon and Mayall's tannery. By 1919 there were nine tanneries.

This industrial expansion continued after World War One when small gaps in the urban development were filled by inter-war housing estate and Wren's race course was changed to public housing. The Second War was the end of the first wave of urban development in Richmond and hence forms a perceptible period in the historic environment that is the basis for proposed heritage precincts in Richmond, Cremorne and Burnley.

Specific history

This area is part of the 17 acre Crown Portion (CP) 1 sold to Messrs William Burnley, David Lyons and Matthew Cantler in 1849: land sales started immediately in the south-west corner with subdivided lots going to Burnley, Thomas King and Mitchell, Black & Follett. Inspired by the major population increase caused by gold finds in the Colony, William Burnley began to sell more house lots further north in 1852 from an estate plan that included the formation of today's Rout and Blanche Streets running east-west, joined by Wellington Street running north-south. Lots of 32-35 feet width faced onto Wellington Street and backed onto CP2 on the east or the 15 feet wide Huckerby Street, on the west, that Burnley had created to serve the lots facing Punt Road.

The 1853 plan shows Jessie and Cremorne Streets in place within Crown Portions 1&2 and the 1855 plan has buildings distributed across the north part of the Crown Portions, along Wellington (as far as Blanche) and Cremorne Streets, while to the south they front only Cremorne Street. The 1874 plan shows the north part of Wellington, Huckerby, Blanche and Jessie Streets in this precinct.

King, Mitchell, Black and Follett's block, created from the south part of Crown Portion 1 in 1849, was to eventually contain the residential subdivision of Melrose and Kelso Streets in 1884 (Lodged Plan 605) with lots of 33-45 feet frontages. This estate is shown on the Tuxen 1888 plan, along with added streets such as Rout, but still there was no continuity for Wellington Street which stopped at Blanche St. The MMBW Plan 911 of 1896 showed the extension of Wellington Street southwards, past Blanche Street, but named as Melrose Street.

Description

The Wellington Street, Cremorne Heritage Precinct is a largely Victorian-era residential area centred on Wellington Street and extends north from the riverside industrial precinct south of Gough Street to the commercial strip of Swan Street West on the north. The arbitrary crank in the line of Wellington Street shows the two development phases (early and late Victorian-era) and exemplifies the piecemeal nature of private development, generally, in the Richmond area.

The haphazard street alignments generate unexpected house groups and vistas. There is the long weatherboard cottage row in Gough Place that now faces out across a large development site towards Punt Road: its unbroken roofline is another testimony of how Richmond, as well as being planned on a free-market basis, was also outside of the building laws that initially applied to the other inner suburbs of Melbourne (Melbourne Building Act). The construction of small, weatherboard and brick cottages in the narrow confines of the early Huckerby and Jessie Streets is another illustration of this evasion of standard building codes. The Richmond Conservation Study (1985) notes of Cremorne Cottage, at 50 Jessie Street: '...Similar size building shown in similar location on Lands Dept 1855 Map of Richmond...' Other early houses such as 375-377 Punt Road can also be traced back in plan form to the 1855 survey map, adjoining the Rout Street entry to the precinct. A small Wellington Street house row (66-68) had rare and early brick-nogged wall construction as an indication of early construction techniques in this precinct. This method of wall construction involves brickwork placed between timber frame members and overlaid with weatherboard providing for an uncommon and environmentally sound building method. The Australian Architecture Index cites two other brick nogged houses nearby in Cremorne St auctioned in 1879.

The precinct has a number of individually significant Victorian-era buildings and building rows within its boundaries.

Key buildings

Key buildings include late Victorian-era houses like the row-house pair at 397- 395 Punt Road, described in the 1990s as:

'... A double-storey, rendered, Boom terrace pair, set back with a parapet. The centrepiece is (set) between abstracted Doric pilasters, supported by scrolls. Cornice and frieze-mould has vermiculated corbels; also to verandah, these on scrollbrackets. The skillion verandah, between wing-walls, has cast-iron lace valence and Composite posts, with first-storey balustrade in an unusual pattern of panels between balusters. Ground-window is tripartite with Tuscan fluted mullions. Doors have fan and sidelights. Chimneys have corbelled brick-bands' as an illustration of the range of ornament that was used in the late 19th century.

More typical, late Victorian-era masonry row houses line Wellington Street. Balino Cottage at 44 Wellington St, is an exception:

'A characteristic double-fronted, symmetrical, rendered, Boom cottage, on the street line, with rich decoration. There is a balustraded parapet between piers, surmounted by balloons. The centrepiece has a scallop-shell in a round arch, with acroterion. Piers are supported by small scroll-brackets. A frieze and cornice-mould is supported by brackets, between festoons. The parapet and verandah wing-wall corbels are vermiculated, the latter on scroll-brackets. The brickwork beneath the verandah was exposed, decorated with diamond ceramic tiles. The tripartite window has barleysugar Tuscan mullions and bluestone cill and fanlight over door. The verandah is convex, with cast-iron posts, lace-valence and brackets. There are encaustic geometric tiles. The chimney has deep rendered Classical mould'...

Edwardian-era development is seen in houses facing Kelso Street (5, 9) as well as the former grocer's shop at 12 Kelso Street (Peter Byrne's shop in 1904 and Marcus Steel's in 1920), providing the sense of a self contained domain where provisions were available to householders within walking distance. Intermixed with these are the numerous Victorian-era houses, mainly weatherboard clad, with corrugated iron clad hipped roofs (but with some parapeted forms such as 17 Kelso Street) and little in the way of front gardens. Cremorne Court Flats in Punt Road and the Old English style house Teragram in Wellington Street, represent the well-preserved inter-war buildings that make up a minority of sites in the precinct.

Main development period

The main development period evident in the heritage overlay is that of the Victorian and Edwardian-eras, with a contribution from well preserved interwar buildings and individually significant places of all eras.

Contributory elements

Contributory elements include mainly (but not exclusively) Victorian-era and Edwardian-era houses, with some well preserved residential examples from the immediate post First-War era, having typically:

- . pitched gabled or hipped roofs;
- . one storey wall heights;
- . weatherboard, face brick, or stucco wall cladding; corrugated iron, with some slate roofing;
- . chimneys of either stucco finish (with moulded caps) or of matching face brickwork with capping courses;
- . post-supported verandah elements facing the street;
- . less than 40% of the street wall face comprised with openings such as
- . windows and doors; and
- . front gardens, bordered by low front fences, typically of timber picket for the Victorian and Edwardian-eras.

Contributory elements also include public infrastructure, expressive of the Victorian and Edwardian-eras such as stone pitched road paving, kerbs and channels, and asphalt paved footpaths.

How is it significant?

The Wellington Street, Cremorne, Heritage Precinct is aesthetically and historically significant (National Estate Register Criteria E1, A4) to the locality of Cremorne and the City of Yarra.

Why is it significant?

Wellington Street, Cremorne, Heritage Precinct is significant:

- . As a well defined area of Victorian and Edwardian-era houses that matches the major growth periods in Richmond's and the City's housing history, complementing the existing adjoining Cremorne Heritage Overlay Area and individual heritage overlays within its boundaries;
- . For some distinctive house groups such as in Gough Place, well preserved inter-war examples such as Cremorne Court Flats, and significant individual house examples; and
- . For its role as one of the first development plans launched in Richmond, with some houses reflecting the 1850s estates.

Heritage Study/Consultant Yarra - Heritage Gap Study, Graeme Butler & Associates, 2007;

Hermes Number 172551

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/>