
Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area

Location

Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area

Municipality

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO2016

Heritage Listing

Greater Geelong City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - December 6, 2018

What is Significant?

The Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area including residences dating from the Victorian, Federation and Interwar periods. Austin Park with its mature elm trees and sloped form is also significant as is the early basalt kerbing and channelling to the streets.

How is it Significant?

The Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Greater Geelong.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, the Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area is significant as a residential area that consists mostly of Victorian period houses and includes several early examples of modest cottages that were once common but of which there are now relatively few within the Municipality. These cottages are representative of the modest housing that was erected in nearby areas of Geelong, close to the commercial centre during the mid-19th century.

The narrow lanes with small allotments were quickly developed in the mid-19th century following the initial land sales in the late 1840s and early 1950s. Corio Street, McCann Place and Fyfe Place were part of the original

1838 survey of Geelong, whilst other lanes, extending north and south from Corio Street, were laid out as land was further subdivided, providing access to the small residential allotments. The area had largely been developed by circa 1900, with a few infill houses constructed during the Federation and Interwar periods as the population of Geelong grew and the suburbs expanded.

Historically, the land now known as Austin Park is also significant as a site that remained undeveloped and was used in the early Victorian period for the grazing of residents animals and by local footballers. Austin Park was gazetted as a public park in 1885, a time when the Council was expanding the number of public parks and improving those already set aside as a way of beautifying the city. (Criterion A)

The Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area is of aesthetic significance as a cohesive area consisting mostly of Victorian residences, with a few later houses from the Federation and Interwar periods which have a similar character to the earlier dwellings. The significant and contributory buildings in the precinct are mostly modest, single storey cottages, with a mix of hipped and transverse gable roof types, all clad in corrugated metal sheeting. Houses are predominantly clad in weatherboards, though there are a couple of notable brick examples and one early rendered residence. The consistent scale, material palette and the limited (if any) setbacks, combined with the relatively narrow width of all streets creates a cohesive character that is distinct from other areas in Geelong. The remaining sections of early basalt kerbing and channelling also contribute to the character.

The precinct is enhanced by Austin Park which slopes down towards the bay, providing views of the harbour from Corio and England streets. Landscaped in the 1880s by John Raddenberry, the park has mature elm trees to its south, east and west boundaries. Unusually relatively modest houses surround the parkland. (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Geelong City Fringe Heritage Area Review, RBA Architects + Conservation Consultants, 2018;
Other Names	Previously part of the City Fringe Heritage Area,
Hermes Number	202171
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area is a residential precinct located immediately to the east of the commercial centre of Geelong. It consists of Austin Park and the nearby streets to the south and east. The precinct has a distinctive character with relatively narrow streets and lanes to which there are modest cottages on relatively small allotments with limited setbacks. The precinct centres on the east-west road of Corio Street which was set out in the original town survey as a narrower intermediate street between Malop Street and Corio Terrace. McCann Place and Fyfe Place were also part of the original town survey, providing access from Corio Street to the rear of allotments fronting Yarra and Bellarine streets. Other lanes in the precinct appear to have been set out as the land was further subdivided.

Austin Park, located on the corner of Bellarine Street and Eastern Beach Road, slopes down towards the north-west and Geelong Harbour. Houses to England Street and a few to Corio Street are located opposite, having views of both the park and the bay beyond. There are mature Dutch elms (*Ulmus x hollandica 'Major'*) to the south, east and west sides of the park (6 to Corio Street, 9 to Bellarine Street and 4 to England Street with two young specimens in the south-east corner). There are also three palms and a peppercorn to the northern end of the garden.

A curved basalt retaining wall has been introduced in the north-west corner to one side of the asphalt pathway. Adjacent in the wide embankment that slopes down to Eastern Beach Road is low planting, including many succulents. The latter also features volcanic rock edging and other small groups of rocks. The roads surrounding

the park retain sections of early basalt kerbing and channelling as does Corio Street.

The significant and contributory buildings largely date from the Victorian period, and include several early examples from the 1850s. Other contributory places include three Federation period houses and an Interwar residence. Most houses in the precinct are relatively modest, and have limited, if any setback from the street and side boundaries. All significant and contributory houses are single storey, except for the two storey residences at 1 and 5 England Street. A notable row of three houses at 147, 149 and 151 Corio Street have been altered at the rear to accommodate a second level but are mostly intact to the front.

Houses in the precinct are predominantly clad in weatherboards with exceptions being the brick residence at 1 England Street, the Irish Cottages to McCann Place and the rendered residence at 150 Corio Street. Roofs are usually hipped or have a transverse gable and all are clad in corrugated metal sheeting. The facades are mostly symmetrical and have a verandah to the front, typically extending the full width of the house. Verandahs usually have a concave or convex roof profile and often with cast iron or timber detailing, some of which has been altered/renewed. Victorian period residences typically have a central door with timber sash window to either side. Many houses in the precinct also retain at least one chimney, most of which are face brick. Unusually, the cottage at 148 Corio Street has four elaborate rendered chimneys with panels and brackets.

Houses from the Federation and Interwar periods are consistent with the earlier houses in the precinct in terms of their scale, setbacks and material palette. Both the Federation period house at 3 Cogens Place and the Interwar period residence at 8 Cogens Place have similar street setbacks to the nearby Victorian period cottages. Similarly, the Federation period cottage at 6 McCann Place is constructed to the street boundary like the adjacent Victorian house at no. 4. The house at no. 6 also has the same form as the earlier house and is similarly constructed of brick with a rendered plinth and windows sills.

There is some late 20th century, generally two storey housing in the area, with most being concentrated at the southern end of England Street.

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/>