

Rookery Estate Precinct



11 Majore Street.jpg



21 Yarra Grove.jpg



6 Austin Street.jpg



Rookery Estate Precinct Map

Location

Evansdale Road and Austin Street and Majore Street and Yarra Grove HAWTHORN, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO778

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - October 26, 2021

What is Significant?

The Rookery Estate Precinct comprising 2-16 & 1-7 Austin Street; 24-40 & 65-73 Evansdale Road; 2-12 & 11 Majore Street and 1-21 & 14-18 Yarra Grove, developed between 1876-1907 is significant.

How is it significant?

The Rookery Estate Precinct is of local historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The Rookery Estate Precinct is historically significant as a demonstration of the expansion of Hawthorn during the 1870s and 1880s when middle-class residents took advantage of the subdivision of the earlier large mansion estates into smaller lots. The expansion of the Victorian era is well represented in the suburb of Hawthorn where mansion houses rub shoulders with the villas of the middle classes and the single fronted houses of those with a lower socio-economic status. The Rookery Estate Precinct is historically significant as part of St James Park, a subdivision of the property Invergowrie owned by Sir James Palmer. Prompted by the extension of the railway to Hawthorn, the subdivisions of 1876 by Captain W Wright and of 1888 by Charles Taylor and Percy Russell, proceeded at a similar time to the St James Park Estate.

The Rookery Estate Precinct is historically significant for its association with Hawthorn builders Thomas Austin (after whom Austin Street is named), William Hosken Langdon who developed 12 Majore Street and 21 Yarra Grove; and George Simpson who developed 9-19 Yarra Grove in 1906-7. People associated with other particular houses in the Precinct include Councillor William Cowper (11 Majore Street), Alexander Tough, a ships' chandler, (18 Yarra Grove) and Charles Taylor (14 Yarra Grove). (Criterion A).

The Rookery Estate Precinct demonstrates a predominantly Victorian-era precinct but mixed with some Federation-era housing. It demonstrates, like other precincts in Hawthorn and Kew, where mansion houses remaining from the mid 1870s are interspersed with 1880s villas. It also demonstrates a variety in allotment size that is characteristic of the re-subdivision of larger allotments into smaller house lots, then further subdivided into the smallest size - the single-fronted terrace. Multi residence developments planned and built together are well represented at 3, 5, 7 Austin Street and 2-16 Austin Street (now excluding No. 8), 2-10 Majore Street and 9-19 Yarra Grove. The precinct comprises examples of attached and detached houses, both single and double fronted, a terrace row at 28-40 Evansdale Road, and pairs of houses in multiples. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, the Rookery Estate Precinct is significant for its Victorian-era mansions in large grounds at 11 Majore Street and 14 and 18 Yarra Grove (although these relate more to the Yarra River). The late Victorian-era mansion at 21 Yarra Grove is a significant and highly prominent element in an otherwise more modest street. The unusual shape of the precinct is demonstrated by the staggered frontages of 2-16 Austin Street. 2-4 Austin Street are notable for their fine quality polychrome brick patterning. Opposite these houses, 3, 5 & 7 Austin Street retain

most of their Victorian elements of verandahs, chimneys and slate roofs, and are enhanced by their garden settings. The development at 2-10 Majore Street (despite some loss of features to Nos. 4 & 6) shows distinctive features of slate roofs, verandahs and bay windows. The terrace row at 28-40 Evansdale makes a significant contribution in terms of the skyline of elaborate balustraded parapets and the repetitive elements of wing walls and verandahs, most of which are intact. The precinct is aesthetically significant for the picturesque combination of steeply pitched roofs, timber fretwork, brick and rough-cast stucco used at 9-19 Yarra Grove. These houses are fine compositions displaying a masterful combination of commonly used elements to distinguish one from another. (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 3: Hawthorn, Context, 2018;
Hermes Number	202200
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The Rookery Estate Precinct is a roughly triangular shaped precinct bounded by the railway line, Evansdale Road and Yarra Grove. The railway cuts across the regular grid of streets at an oblique angle and Yarra Grove reflects the course of the adjacent Yarra River through a bend in the street alignment. The precinct is bisected by Austin and Majore Streets. Towards the rear of the properties on Austin Street there is a drainage easement across a shallow depression before the land rises towards Burwood Road. Several properties, including three on Yarra Grove and three on the east side of Evansdale Street, are just outside this triangular area, but are similar in character.

The earliest residences were constructed by 1876 and advertised with views of the Yarra and well suited for villa residences. 3-9A Majore Street redeveloped following the demolition of two Victorian villas marked on the re-subdivision map. The remaining mansion on a large allotment at 11 Majore Street has undergone removal of the upper floor verandah and changes to the windows.

The houses at 3-9A Majore Street are single storey 1940s houses in brick and stucco with terra-cotta tile hipped roofs. 9 Majore Street is intact apart from overpainting of the decorative brickwork. Nos. 2-4 & 8-10 Majore Street are interesting examples of paired Victorian houses either side of No.6, which is the central property of this street development pattern. Despite its major roof alterations, 6 Majore Street is also a Victorian house. Nos. 2-4 and 8-10 Majore Street share characteristics of quite unusual form, being larger examples than a terrace house and featuring bay windows and continuous verandahs. 2-4 Majore Street are less intact than 8-10 Majore Street, with 4 Majore Street having undergone substantial alterations and the removal of the verandah, whilst 2 has been renovated with a different profile to the verandah. Despite these changes the group is of interest for its two pairs of houses.

Austin Street is characterised by typical late Victorian asymmetrical villas but these achieve an interesting streetscape through the staggered building frontages that reflect the angle of the street. The pattern of development comprises 2 pairs of houses at 10, 12-16 Austin Street separated by a laneway from houses at 2, 4 & 6 Austin Street, two of which have excellent polychrome brick patterning. Both sides of Austin Street were completely built on by 1905. 12 & 16 Austin Street are a pair of typical Victorian asymmetrical fronted villas with bay windows and stucco finish. 3, 5 & 7 Austin Street are typical double fronted symmetrical Victorian villas with some similar detailing to the eaves and chimneys, strongly indicating that they were constructed by the same builder and resident Thomas Austin.

Evansdale Road has a row of well preserved single fronted Victorian terrace houses from 28-38 Evansdale Road. No.40 is an attached and matching house but double fronted to suit the larger triangular site. The houses all have elaborately stuccoed and balustraded parapets with central entablatures and shell motifs. The verandahs are all

gently curved convex in shape. Some of the terrace houses have high walls facing the street, although there are some examples of lower and more open fencing.

The pattern of development in Yarra Grove evolved from the presence of the Yarra River, both in the alignment of the street and in the age of the residences. Higher ground that was free of flooding was built on at 14-18 Yarra Grove where two-storey Victorian mansions with frontages to the river were constructed. 14 & 18 Yarra Grove still exist but 16 Yarra Grove has now been demolished. Ravenswood at 18 Yarra Grove is a fine double storey and double fronted mansion designed with its front facade facing the river. It had a two-storey verandah with cast iron columns, frieze and balustrade facing the river, but this was removed (possibly temporarily) in 2017. Arch-headed ground floor windows have been converted to doors but the door and upper floor windows are intact. The walls show some early stucco finish and ruled line work to resemble stone ashlar. This building is undergoing renovation in 2017.

On the lower ground at 2-14 Yarra Grove, houses of the Interwar and Postwar period have been built. An indication of the mansion status of Yarra Grove is seen at 21 Yarra Grove where an asymmetrical two-storey villa is designed to fit on a tight triangular shaped allotment. This building features a two-storey bay window and a return verandah to the Yarra Grove elevation. 9-19 Yarra Grove comprises smaller Federation residences built with slate roofs, red brick walls and timber verandah fretwork. These interesting properties are designed as a group in 1906 and comprise three different pairs of houses (6 dwellings in total) that are not identical. The designs feature a similar set of design elements with timber verandahs, gabled roofs and the use of plain red brick with panels of stucco. Towards the higher ground at 1-5 Yarra Grove, two earlier Victorian villas and one Federation villa were built by 1905. 1 Yarra Grove is a well preserved bichrome brick villa with finely detailed barge boards and a bay window set in a projecting gable.

Overall the precinct reflects the immediate topography of the locality, with later development filling in the gaps between older houses on the higher ground. The area is a mix of large Victorian houses at 11 Majore Street, 18 & 21 Yarra Grove, Victorian villa housing in Austin Street, a terrace row at 28-40 Evansdale Street, paired Victorian houses at 2-4 & 8-10 Majore Street and Federation pairs at 9-19 Yarra Grove. The later evolution of the precinct is demonstrated by the 1930-40s houses at 3-9A Majore 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/>