

Burwood Road Estate Precinct



14 Oberon Avenue.jpg



6 to 2 Tara Street.jpg



East side of Oberon Avenue.jpg



Burwood

Location

Oberon Avenue and Tara Street HAWTHORN EAST, BOROONDARA CITY

Municipality

BOROONDARA CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

Heritage Listing

Boroondara City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 30, 2022

What is significant?

Burwood Road Estate Precinct, comprising 1-27 & 2-24 Oberon Avenue; and 1 & 2-14 Tara Street, Hawthorn East, are significant. It was subdivided in 1885 and 1888, and all but one house in the precinct was completed by 1903 (with the final one built shortly afterward).

All properties within the precinct are Contributory, and the bluestone pitched kerbs, channels and laneways also contribute to its significance.

How is it significant?

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

Why is it significant?

Burwood Road Estate Precinct illustrates the rapid growth in the northern part of Hawthorn East that followed the opening of the Auburn and Camberwell railway stations in 1882. After the estate was subdivided in 1885 and 1888, rows of timber cottages were built rapidly, with more than half of them completed by 1888 and all but one of the others by 1903. The division of the original wide 'villa sites' into narrower allotments occupied mostly by single-fronted cottages illustrates the more modest means of their early occupants, workers in the trades and service industries, who were nonetheless able to share in Melbourne's high level of home ownership and improved living standards in the 1880s. The irregular pattern of streets with a single outlet and dogleg in Oberon Avenue illustrates the private nature of road creation during the late Victorian period. Its street layout was made even more irregular by the 1882 railway line forming a diagonal boundary to Tara Street, and its subdivision in two stages resulting in a dogleg in Oberon Avenue. (Criterion A)

The precinct is of architectural significance for its collection of Victorian Italianate cottages and houses that illustrate the modest yet stylish dwellings occupied by trade and service-industry workers of Hawthorn East in the nineteenth century. They display the principal features of this style, including low-pitched hipped roofs, chimneys with a rendered cornice, bracketed eaves (many with raised panels between them), front or return verandahs with slender posts or columns and cast-iron ornament, double-hung sash windows often with sidelights, and four-panelled front doors with raised cricket-bat mouldings. While most are timber houses with ashlar-look boards to the facades, there are a few built of polychrome brickwork utilising the local Hawthorn bricks. The majority of the houses are single-fronted cottages, along with five double-fronted houses with symmetrical or asymmetrical facades, both typical of the Italianate style. (Criterion D)

While most of the houses in the precinct have quite standard Victorian Italianate forms and details, their rapid construction by a small group of builders has created by an unusually high level of overall consistency in the streetscapes, as well as a small point of difference. Half of the c1885-88 cottages in the early part of the subdivision are characterised by distinctively small-scale ashlar board to their facades (14, 16, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25 & 27 Oberon Avenue and 4 & 6 Tara Street), marking them as the work of a single builder. The streetscapes are enhanced by the retention of bluestone pitched kerb and channels and laneways, and the irregular course of the two streets in the precinct provide additional visual interest. (Criterion E)

Physical Description 1

Description & Integrity

Burwood Road Estate Precinct is a small pocket of land tucked behind Victoria Road and entered off Burwood Road where it intersects the railway line. The north-west orientation of the railway line gives the western part of the precinct an irregular plan, with Tara Street changing course to follow it. Oberon Avenue also has an irregular plan, first leading directly north off Burwood Road and then shifting west with a dogleg where two separate subdivisions met.

The two streets are paved with asphalt and retain bluestone pitched kerbs and two-pitcher channel (gutter) along Tara Street, while Oberon Avenue retains a soft shoulder (no kerb) and a shallow channel to its southern half (with concrete kerb and channel north of that). The channel is four pitches wide on the west side of the street (widening further at the intersection with Tara Street) and just two or three pitches on the east side. In addition, the laneway that intersects with the north end of Oberon Avenue retains its bluestone paving.

The housing stock in the precinct is highly consistent, reflecting its construction over a short period of time. All of the houses can all be described as Victorian Italianate in style. This style is characterised by low-pitched hipped roofs, chimneys with a rendered cornice, bracketed eaves (many with raised panels between them), front or return verandahs with slender posts or columns and cast-iron ornament, double-hung sash windows often with sidelights, and four-panelled front doors with raised cricket-bat mouldings. This description can be applied to virtually all the houses in the precinct.

The most common sub-type seen in the precinct is a single-front timber cottage with ashlar-look boards to the front facade (emulating more expensive stone). All of the dwellings were built as detached houses, though 17 & 19 Oberon Avenue have been built up against each other by different builders (judging from the differing facade details). The houses on the north side of Tara Street (Nos. 2-12) and on the east side of Oberon Avenue (Nos. 1-27) are all raised on stumps, so front verandahs are reached via short flights of steps and often have a balustrade.

Exceptions to this are six double-fronted timber houses, and six face brick houses. The double-fronted houses are of two types typical of the Italianate style: those with flat (block-fronted) symmetrical facades (22 & 24 Oberon Avenue, 1 Tara Street which appears to face west), and those with a hipped bay projecting to one side creating an asymmetrical facade (5 & 20 Oberon Avenue, 14 Tara Street). Apart from one exception (8 Tara Street), all of the brick houses are in the north part of Oberon Street subdivided around 1888 (they are 1, 2, 3, 8 & 12 Oberon Avenue). Half of them have been overpainted, but the remainder all have tuckpointed polychrome brickwork of brown Hawthorn brick wall with cream and red brick banding. No. 8 Oberon Avenue also has geometric diaper patterns.

Amongst the timber houses, there is a group in the southern part of the precinct (subdivided in 1885) that has a distinctively small-scale ashlar board to their facades, indicating the work of a single builder. These are 14, 16, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25 & 27 Oberon Avenue; and 4 & 6 Tara Street.

While ornamentation of the houses is quite consistent among the houses in the precinct, some have additional features such as raised mouldings or twisted columns between windows, more complex raised mouldings between eaves brackets (such as those at 14 & 16 Oberon Avenue and 14 Tara Street), or cast-iron balustrades to some houses in an elevated position (23 & 25 Oberon Avenue and 10 Tara Street appear to be original). One brick and one timber house, at 2 & 6 Oberon Avenue, have inset tiles to their facades, while 13 Oberon Avenue has a scalloped apron below the front window and a fluted chimney shaft.

The streetscapes of the precinct have extremely high integrity, with no non-contributory properties among them. All houses are clearly recognisable as Victorian Italianate in period and style, though some have undergone changes over the years. The most frequent alterations are to front verandahs, ranging from the frequent replacement of verandah posts and loss of cast-iron frieze and brackets, to entire rebuilding (seen at 20 & 21 Oberon Avenue). The most intact verandahs in the precinct are those at 4, 14, 16, 18 & 25 Oberon Avenue and 6 Tara Street (slender stop-chamfered posts, which have lost their built-up capitals at No. 16), 27 Oberon Avenue and 10 Tara Street (slender round timber columns, which have lost their cast-iron Corinthian capitals, as well as cast-iron at 10 Tara Street).

Less frequent alterations include the removal of eaves brackets, the replacement of front doors, the overpainting of brick, removal or lopping of chimney tops (4, 6, 10 & 18 Oberon Avenue), replacement of front windows with a different format (12 Tara Street), and modern rear extensions. For the most part, these extensions are not visible from the street, so do not impact on the streetscape. An exception is 9 Oberon Avenue, where a two-storey rear extension is set two rooms back from the facade, and is partially visible but not overwhelmingly so.

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/>