

Essington Estate and Environs Precinct



23 Mayston Street.jpg



29 Mayston Street.jpg



The north side of Mayston Street.jpg



Essington Estate Environs Precinct

Location

Harold Street and Mayston 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 - June 1, 2022

What is significant?

Essington Estate & Environs Precinct, comprising 5-73 & 44-50 Harold Street; and 17-73 & 8-56 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East, is significant. Once the grounds of a Victorian mansion (at 67 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East), was subdivided in 1888 and the majority of dwellings were constructed between 1900 and 1914. Dwellings include substantial and more modest detached houses, as well as a large number of semi-detached pairs, particularly on Harold Street.

The following properties are Significant to the precinct: 29 Mayston Street, 34 Mayston Street, 37 Mayston Street (HO463), 51 Mayston Street (HO464) and 67 Mayston Street (HO465), Hawthorn East.

The following properties are Non-contributory to the precinct: 14, 20, Units 1-4/21, 32, 35, 36, 38, 46, 50 & 61 Mayston Street; and 17, 23, 27, 27A, 45, 53 & 53A Harold Street.

The remaining properties are Contributory, as is the bluestone pitched laneways between the two streets, as are the original timber picket front fences (but not the gates) at 44 and 46 Harold Street.

How is it significant?

Essington Estate & Environs Precinct is of local historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The precinct demonstrates the transition of Hawthorn East from a place of substantial gentlemen's estates to closer suburban development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first phase is still clearly demonstrated by landowner Richard Mayston Willdridge's family home 'Essington' of 1874 at what is now 67 Mayston Street, as well as two other Italianate villas of 1893 believed to have been built by Willdridge for family members, and bluestone pitched laneways typical of this period. In 1888, Essington Estate allotments began to be sold off, followed shortly by the 1890s depression. This meant that construction of houses on the new blocks was largely delayed until the first years of the 1900s. This gives the precinct a very strong Edwardian character, making it distinct among the late nineteenth-century development that followed the coming of the railway in 1882 that characterises most of Hawthorn East. (Criterion A)

The precinct provides a particularly strong representation of the domestic styles popular in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This includes the continuation of the Italianate style beyond the nineteenth century, though more up-to-date details such as red face brick and turned timber posts indicate the later date of these examples. It also contains a very large number of Edwardian (or Federation) Queen Anne houses, both the large asymmetric villas of brick or timber, as well as a large number of single-fronted detached and semi-detached dwellings on Harold Street (two of which retain their original picket front fences). The precinct also contains a small number of fine examples of nineteenth-century Italianate houses, with their higher level of ornamentation (two of which are Significant: 37 & 67 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East), as well as a handful of interwar dwellings, mainly blocks of flats which were so characteristic of Hawthorn during this period. (Criterion D)

The precinct contains many fine Queen Anne houses, large and small, many with distinctive details such as fretwork with a Japanese influence, pierced details or sunburst patterns within arches, corner porches treated like towers, and bas-relief ornament to a front gable. Two houses of particular note are the elegant timber villa at 29 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East with bow windows to the front facade and very deep verandah fretwork with elegant pierced details. It is joined by the very different 34 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East built of brown Hawthorn bricks with arched fretwork to its verandahs, combined with a reversed-arched balustrade to create a circular opening. Harold Street is distinguished by its very high level of aesthetic cohesion of its streetscapes of houses built within the 15 year period before the First World War. (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Boroondara - Municipal-Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 6: Hawthorn East, Context, 2018;
Hermes Number	202210
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Description & Integrity

Essington Estate Precinct sits between Camberwell and Burke roads, running along both sides of Mayston Street and primarily the north side of Harold Street. Both streets have bluestone pitched kerbs and channels. The street trees along Harold Street are young deciduous trees, while those along Mayston Street are semi-mature eucalypts. The subdivision included a bluestone-pitched laneway between Mayston and Harold streets, which turns south to exit between 5 and 7 Harold Street, Hawthorn East. There is slight encroachment of commercial uses at the west end of Mayston Street, and more extensively along the south side of Harold Street, but the core areas have an inner suburban residential character.

As noted in the history, there was very limited development in the precinct during the nineteenth century, resulting in a handful of houses on Mayston Street, most of which were associated with the Willdrige family. This changed at the turn of the century as the majority of houses were built in the first decade of the new century, with nearly all completed by the outbreak of World War I in 1914. There was minor infill development at the east end of Mayston Street during the interwar period.

While the large majority of the houses were built after 1900, most of the earlier examples on Mayston Street still follow the Italianate style for the most part, giving it a mixed Victorian-Edwardian character. In keeping with the larger lots on this street, the houses on Mayston Street are mostly double-fronted and the majority are built of brick. This contrasts with the smaller timber houses on Harold Street, which are slightly later in built-date and thus more consistently Edwardian in character.

The nineteenth-century houses on Mayston Street are all Italianate in style. The earliest of them, 67 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East (HO465) is the only two-storey single dwelling in the precinct. All four have an asymmetric facade with a projecting canted bay to one side. The three earlier houses (Nos. 23, 37 & 67) are finished in cement render, with moulded decorative details. The houses at Nos. 23 and 37 were identical, however No. 37 has never been painted (though it may have been limewashed) hence its significant grade (HO493). Indicative of its turn-of-the-century date, 71 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East (1898-99) shows a transition of Federation with red face brick walls and a projecting gable-fronted bay with a parapeted canted bay below. The return verandah of the house was replaced during the interwar period with a heavy rendered construction fashionable at that time.

The early twentieth-century Italianate houses on both streets are similar to the early examples in the use of low M-hipped usually covered in slate, chimneys with rendered cornices, bracketed eaves and double-hung sash windows. Most of the double-fronted examples still have a projecting hipped-roof bay to the facade (29-35 Harold Street, 12 & 42 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East), while one has a more Federation-influenced gabled bay (59 Mayston Street) and two others comprise a single-fronted semi-detached pair (25-27 Mayston Street). The walls are similar to the turn-of-the-century at 71 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East with red face brick, with Hawthorn brick or render banding. Another transitional element, indicating a Federation influence, is the use of turned timber posts to verandahs instead of slim Corinthian colonettes, still combined with cast-iron lacework (original examples appear to survive at 29 Harold Street and 59 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East). There are examples of Corinthian columns with cast-iron lacework, at 25-27 & 42 Mayston Street, but these may be sympathetic restorations. All examples that pair timber posts with timber fretwork appear to be restoration works (see 31-35 Harold Street and 12 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East).

The double-fronted Edwardian houses all follow the asymmetrical Queen Anne massing with a projecting gable-fronted bay to one side of the front facade and a verandah (front or return) beside it. There is a clear differentiation in material between the two streets, with most of the Mayston Street examples constructed of red brick, and most of the Harold Street examples of timber weatherboard (with notable exceptions on both streets).

On both streets most of the roofs have a high hip (except the gabled 16 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East), often with a decorative gablet at the apex, and many of them retain their terracotta tile cladding, with a smaller number retaining slates all of which are on Mayston Street. Chimneys are mostly of corbelled red brick, though some have a roughcast rendered cap. Some of these houses retain the Italianate front verandah form, set below bracketed eaves, while the majority adopt the Federation form with the main roof continuing over the verandah. This is particularly well expressed for those houses with a return verandah (e.g., 29 Mayston Street, 51 Harold Street, Hawthorn East), including 44 Harold Street, Hawthorn East which has a gablet over the corner of the verandah emphasising the diagonal axis. With only two exceptions (47 & 51 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East), the houses in this group have turned timber verandah posts and timber fretwork. The fretwork designs are quite varied and either include a straight frieze plus corner brackets or arched friezes. Some houses have fretwork with particularly interesting pierced details (44, 48 & 50 Harold Street; 29 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East), and others have a sunburst pattern within a timber arched frieze (34 & 44 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East). While some double-hung sashes are still seen during this period, most windows are casements with highlights of coloured pressed glass or leadlight. In many cases, there is a projecting rectangular or curved window bay, either set below a jettied gable or a separate roof form/hood. Nearly all windows are rectangular in format, with a fine round-arched window below the verandah of 18 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East. There is a variety of treatments to the projecting front gables, however, the most common is half-timbering, some with diagonal patterns or more complex curvilinear patterns (e.g., 46 Harold Street; 47 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East). A smaller group has decorative timber trusswork set proud of a brick or roughcast rendered gable (e.g., 44 Harold Street; 30, 33 & 51 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East), or decoratively shaped timber shingles (e.g., 44, 48 & 50 Harold Street, Hawthorn East).

Two of the most interesting houses of this period are located on Mayston Street, at Nos. 29 and 34. No. 29 is a timber villa with a gable-hipped roof clad in renewed terracotta tiles, chimneys caped with roughcast render, and a return verandah continuous with the roof. It is clad in timber weatherboards, with a band of decorative notched boards near the base, and roughcast render (some of which is actually pressed metal) to the two bow (curved bay) windows. The house is distinguished by these bow windows, particularly the one in the front gable which sits below the extensively jettied half-timbered gable and a tapered, curved neck of roughcast render above it. The windows are casements with curved tops and leadlight highlights. Another distinguishing feature is the timber fretwork of the verandah, which has an unusually deep frieze of shaped and pierced slats above complex curvilinear brackets. The house is highly intact as viewed from the street.

The villa at 34 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East is one of the few Edwardian houses in the precinct still using dark brown Hawthorn bricks for its walls above a red brick plinth. The pyramidal hipped roof is covered in slate, combined with some terracotta ridgecapping and ram's horn finials. The chimneys are also of brown brick, with projecting vertical lines of red brick headers and terracotta pots. The projecting front gable has diagonally patterned half-timbering above a bay window set beneath a slate-clad hood. The house has two main verandahs, one to the east side of the front facade, and the other to the west side elevation where the main entrance is. Both verandahs have unusual timber posts with three square sections divided by chamfers and a turned neck. The frieze is arched with a diagonal (or sunburst) pattern infill. The entrance verandah on the west side has a low balustrade with reverse arched railings, creating a nearly circular opening. The front door and surround is broad with glazing to the door, sidelights and highlights of tiny panes of coloured pressed glass. On the front door this sits above two panels of diagonal boarding. This is a fine and distinctive interpretation of the Queen Anne style, and is clearly architect designed. The chimney design is identical to that used by architect J Edmund Burke on two other buildings of that time, (59 Auburn Road, Hawthorn (HO594) and 7-9 Mangarra Road, Canterbury (HO391)), and appears to be his work. This could not be confirmed for certain, however, Burke did place tender notices around this time for a brick villa residence in Hawthorn in 1902 (*The Age*, 15 Mar 1902: 3) which could correspond to this house. The timber house at 16 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East, also has hallmarks of Burke's residential design, chimneys and the same unusual timber posts as at 34 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East and may correspond to the tender notice for a 'villa residence at Auburn, in timber' (*The Age*, 17 Mar 1900:16).

The single-fronted Edwardian houses share many of the same forms and decorative features with the larger examples. Timber construction predominates on Harold Street (with weatherboard or ashlar-board cladding), with some brick on both streets. Most of these single-fronted dwellings have a gable front, sometimes with a small verandah beside it, though there are some notable exceptions with simple hipped roofs (e.g., 67-73 Harold Street, Hawthorn East). There are both detached houses of this type, as well as many semi-detached pairs on Harold Street (and one on Mayston Street at Nos. 41-43), which was a popular form during this era. More houses in this group still use cast-iron verandah decoration, usually combined with the turned timber posts typical of the early twentieth century. While most of these houses have casement windows with pressed-glass highlights, many

still use the Italianate double-hung windows with sidelights, as well as bullnose verandahs set below bracketed eaves. Among those with timber fretwork to their verandah, the Japanese-inspired fretwork at 67-73 Harold Street, Hawthorn East is particularly fine. This row of semi-detached houses is also distinguished by the use of shared hipped roofs with terracotta tiles and ridgecapping. Other houses with details of note include a row of houses with unusual corner verandah forms (43, 47 & 61 Harold Street, Hawthorn East), including a pyramidal roof with zinc ball finial at 47 Harold Street, and a scrolled bas-relief pattern in the gable of 19 Harold Street, Hawthorn East. Details such as chimney forms and gable decoration are similar to those seen on the double-fronted Edwardian houses.

The interwar dwellings on Mayston Street are small in number and include one house and three blocks of flats. The house, at 48 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East is a timber California Bungalow with a gable-fronted roof. Like the earlier Edwardian houses, it is clad in weatherboards and has half-timbering to the major and minor front gables. Typical of the style, the small front porch is supported on tapered roughcast rendered piers. Window and door openings are slightly splayed with a gabled top, showing a Japanese influence. The flats are all two-storey with tiled hipped roofs. Nos. 69 and 73 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East are clad in clinker brick, while No. 69A has rendered walls. Nos. 69A and 73 are very simple in form and detail, while No. 69 is enlivened by heavy round arches to the double-storey front porch.

The overall streetscapes within the precinct boundaries have relatively high integrity, apart from a small number of Non-contributory properties (15 in all, or 15% of the total). While some of the recent Non-contributory development is in scale with the rest of the precinct, it also includes a few bulky two and three-storey late twentieth-century flats buildings that are now scattered through most residential areas of Hawthorn. While unfortunate in scale, they are infrequent enough to allow the original character of the two streets to predominate. Harold Street retains very consistent development along its north side, while there has been more extensive modern development along the south side, leaving only one row of Edwardian houses at Nos. 44-50. As these are a continuous row which share many decorative features, the houses create a visually reinforcing island at the middle of the street. Moreover, Nos. 44 and 46 retain their original timber picket fences, which are relatively rare survivors for this era.

Alterations to both groups of Italianate houses include replacement of verandah posts with sympathetic but simpler replacements in many locations, complete loss of posts and frieze (22 & 40 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East), and overpainting of face brick (35 Harold Street; 40 & 59 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East). Brickwork above the front windows at 26 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East has been rebuilt and the verandah entirely removed, while all face brickwork has been replaced at 32 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East. The most altered house among this group is 40 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East which has lost its front verandah, the windows have been changed in format, and the windows enlarged and replaced, but its roof form, chimneys and front door still make it clearly recognisable as an Italianate house.

Alterations to the Edwardian houses are most commonly the loss or (more or less) sympathetic replacement of verandah supports and ornament (with more noticeable changes to 30, 46 & 56 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East). In a few cases, face brick has been overpainted (57 & 59 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East), or replaced (46 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East). One timber house was over-clad with red brick in the 1990s (50 Harold Street), and another with vinyl siding (8 Mayston Street). One of the oddest alterations is the blocking up of the central front door at 57 Mayston Street, leaving an intact sidelight and highlight. It also appears that this was an Italianate house given an Edwardian remodelling. Some houses have enlarged and replaced windows and the face brick over-rendered (28, 46 & 49 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East), or just windows reconfigured (with resultant changes to brickwork (49 Mayston Street, Hawthorn East).

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/>