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# Bluestone Retaining Walls



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## Location

Devereaux Street and Draska Court and Short Avenue and Ash Grove and Vincent Street and Xavier Street OAK PARK, MORELAND CITY

## Municipality

MERRI-BEK CITY

## Level of significance

Recommended for Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO585

## Heritage Listing

Merri-bek City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 12, 2023

### What is significant?

The bluestone retaining walls at Deveraux Street, Draska Court, and Short Avenue, Ash Grove, Vincent Street and Xavier Street, Oak Park are significant.

### How is it significant?

The bluestone retaining walls are of local aesthetic significance to the City of Moreland.

### Why is it significant?

The Bluestone Retaining Walls have aesthetic significance as a substantial and visually prominent feature within the streetscape of Oak Park that provides important character to the area. They define the boundary of each property along the nominated streets and contribute towards a visual understanding of the terraced landscape of Oak Park. (Criterion E)

Heritage Study/Consultant Moreland Heritage Nominations Study, Extent Heritage, 2022;

Construction dates 1963,

Hermes Number 206916

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

The subject site consists of a long length of bluestone retaining wall which spans the northern side of Deveraux Street, the eastern side of Draska Court, the eastern side of Short Avenue, the eastern side of Ash Grove, the eastern side of Vincent Street and the western side of Xavier Street in Oak Park. The wall forms the delineation between each property and the roadway, with many of the properties sitting high above the roadway on undulating land. The wall has been constructed in sections to allow for driveway or pedestrian access to the properties. In some locations, staircases have been provided as part of the wall to create access to dwellings. These stairs are largely provided in concrete, though there are some remaining bluestone examples. On the most part the retaining wall has a consistent stone block size and layout within the street, though there are sections which have been rebuilt and sections which have been removed which varies the visual setting of the features along the streetscape. Over the years, a number of mortar types have been used for repointing work which ranges from traditional lime style mortar to cement based mortars. Many of these have different pigments as well, ranging between white and dark blue.

## Integrity

Alterations and Additions:

- Repointing with lime based mortar
- Repointing with concrete based mortar\*
- Rebuilding of walls in some areas
- Removal of sections of wall within some property boundaries, specifically sections which may frame a driveway\*
- Concrete stairs in some areas\*

While there have been some changes over time, the Bluestone Retaining Wall retains a high level of integrity overall.

\* Denotes element that detracts from the cultural significance of the place.

## **Physical Conditions**

Overall, the condition of the retaining wall is fair. There are sections which have been well kept and repointed over time. There are sections which are physically impacted by vegetation or moisture. There are also sections which have also been rebuilt poorly. A condition report by Golder Associates in 2009 notes that this area has a higher hazard level in the Moreland municipality for landslide hazards than other areas. The report found 'poor hillside practice' in the area, with 'poorly designed or constructed retaining walls' ( *Golder Associates, 2009, pg. 12* ). A structural assessment, removal of intrusive vegetation and repointing of the wall in areas which have cementitious mortar would have a positive outcome on the long-term condition and stability of the feature. Specifically, the walls along Ash Grove, Vincent Street and Xavier Street are in better condition than the walls along Deveraux Street, Draska Court and Short Avenue.

*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/>*