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## RESERVE - THE STEPS



27242 rossmoyne029 olver reserve



Olver Reserve



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### Location

1 CLARENDON ST, 26 FLINDERS ST, 12 and 19 GOOCH ST, 2a RALEIGH ST, and 29 ROSSMOYNE ST, THORNBURY, DAREBIN CITY

### Municipality

DAREBIN CITY

### Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

### Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO284

### Heritage Listing

Darebin City

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### Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

#### *What is significant?*

'The Steps' Reserves, a series of small reserves running between Flinders and Clarendon Streets, Thornbury, to the east of High Street. Each reserve was set aside in 1909 as what appeared to be drainage reserves along a series of four small laneways running between Clarendon and Mansfield Streets in Thornbury. By 1930, these reserves were listed in the Sands & McDougall Directory as Public Reserves and the Canary Island Palms were

planted by c.1945. In the tradition of Northcote Council of naming their parks in honour of Councillors, particularly Mayors, Olver Reserve was named after William Olver, Mayor of Northcote in 1931-32. The following elements contribute to the significance of the place:

- the land forming the reserves
- the pedestrian thoroughfare from Flinders to Clarendon Streets
- the mature Canary Island Palms within Jones, Olver, and Roberts Reserves; and
- remnant early landscaping materials including lava rock edging

Other street furniture, landscaping, paths, fencing, etc are not significant

#### *How is it significant?*

The Steps Reserves between Flinders and Clarendon Streets, Thornbury are of local historic and aesthetic significance to Darebin City.

#### *Why is it significant?*

Historically, 'The Steps' Reserves are significant for the evidence they provide of Northcote Council's objectives arising out of a 1906 resolution to 'secure such places in the interests of the health and recreation of present and future Northcote citizens', which they did between 1907 and 1933. While initially set aside as drainage reserves, a number of which were acquired by Northcote Council in the 1920s and 30s, they were listed as public reserves by 1930. (AHC criterion A.4)

The mature Canary Island Palms have aesthetic significance as a notable group planting within a parkland in Darebin. (AHC criterion E.1)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Darebin - Darebin Heritage Study, Context P/L, 2011;
Construction dates	1920,
Heritage Act Categories	Registered place,
Other Names	Jones Reserve, Harry Reserve, McDonald Reserve, Olver Reserve, Roberts Reserve,
Hermes Number	27242
Property Number	

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## Physical Description 1

The Steps Reserve is a group of five reserves linking the parallel streets running perpendicular off the east side of High Street, Thornbury. They are locally known as 'The Steps' and form a link between neighbourhoods and the Thornbury shopping centre clustered around the corner of High and Clarendon Streets. (Hecker)

From north to south the reserves are:

- Roberts Reserve, 26 Flinders Street
- Olver Reserve between Rossmoyne and Mansfield Streets (29 Rossmoyne Street)
- Jones Reserve between Rossmoyne and Gooch Streets (19 Gooch Street)
- Harry Reserve between Gooch and Raleigh Streets (12 Gooch Street)
- McDonald Reserve - 2A Raleigh and 1 Clarendon Streets.

Originally drainage reserves dating from the early twentieth century, the parks are simple in plan and design. Together they create a stepped linear reserve, intersected by the perpendicular streets that the reserve connects. Planting is simple comprising lawn and rows/avenues of mature Canary Island Palms (*Phoenix canariensis*).

Roberts, Olver, and Jones Reserves comprise a central pathway, running north-south, with a row of Canary Island palms along both sides. Roberts Reserves differs from Jones and Olver Reserves in that it is only as deep as the residential lots along Flinders Street, with a narrow pedestrian right-of-way linkage the reserve (and Flinders Street) to Mansfield Street (between Nos 19 and 21 Mansfield Street).

Harry Reserve has more recent landscaping including a serpentine brick-paved pathway and garden beds and a more diverse collection of plantings.

Within Jones and Harry Reserves are located a 2003 public art installation, commissioned as part of Darebin's 2003 Art in Public Places programme. The work is a sculpture by Simon Normand and is titled 'Sailing down the Steps', in the form of sunken boats. It is made of steel, copper, stainless steel, glass mosaic, and cement. There are two pieces to the work; one is located in Jones Reserve, the other within Harry Reserve. These reserves also include smaller associated pieces of public art; cement and glass mosaic discs embedded in the ground.

'Sailing down the Steps' symbolises the diverse waves of people coming to Thornbury, who now consider Thornbury home, and the subsequent layers of cultural change and complexity. The idea is that the boats visually transform the park into a river - an interesting feature as both parks are an overflow path for the drains during floods. (<http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au>)

As well, the work symbolises links between past and present indigenous communities, the endangered natural flora of the local area, the Darebin and Merri creeks, and the layers of cultural change and complexity. The artist was assisted by the pupils of the Wales Street Primary School in the works.

McDonald Reserve combines a carpark and toilets and other Council facilities, servicing the suburban shopping centre on the south side of Clarendon Street and shops along High Street it sits to the rear of.

Planting in the Reserves is as follows:

Roberts Reserve - an avenue of paired mature Canary Island Palms; 3 along the east side and 3 along the west side.

Olver Reserve - an avenue of paired mature Canary Island Palms; 6 along the east side and five with space for a sixth along the west. Within the park are also located one modern park bench and simple pole lighting.

Jones Reserve - an avenue of paired mature Canary Island Palms; 5 along the east side and 5 along the west side.

Harry Reserve - comprises greater variety of tree species and less formal layout and planting design. Trees include elms (3), ash, pin oaks (2), acacias.

McDonald Reserve - a pathway and garden bedding along the west boundary of the reserve, edged in volcanic rock. It includes one Canary Island Palm.

Low pipe rail fences define the street boundaries of each reserve. Other recent features include park benches and simple lighting. Remnants of volcanic rock edging remain along the Flinders Street boundary of Roberts Reserve.

*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/>*