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# NAPIER PARK



View from north-eastern corner

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## Location

225 NAPIER STREET, NOBLE AVENUE, and WOODLANDS STREET, STRATHMORE, MOONEE VALLEY CITY

## Municipality

MOONEE VALLEY CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO349

## Heritage Listing

Moonee Valley City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

### What is significant?

Napier Park formerly known as Northern Park was created in 1920 when longtime resident Theodore Napier gave the land to Essendon Council. The deed of gift required that the land be retained in its natural condition and free of development. The significant features of the park are the natural grasses, shrubs and in particular mature River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus Camaldulensis*), which are remnants of the vegetation that covered this area before it

was settled and developed.

### **How is it significant?**

Napier Park is of historical, aesthetic and scientific (horticultural) significance to the City of Moonee Valley and possibly the State of Victoria.

### **Why is it significant?**

Bequeathed to the former City of Essendon by local resident Theodore Napier, this 10 acre park is unique as a remnant pocket of indigenous woodland vegetation surrounded by suburbia. Comprising River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus Camaldulensis*), some thought to be over 300 years old, and native shrubs and grasses, the park is the result of one man's vision to preserve a spectacular section of landscape that he had cherished since childhood. Napier's family were the first Europeans to settle this land, and the dedication of this landscape for park purposes ensures that the land will always remain free of European development. The park is important as an early initiative to preserve Victoria's natural heritage for the appreciation and enjoyment of future generations of suburban residents. A rare scar tree demonstrates that this vegetation has been part of Australia's natural and cultural heritage long before European occupation. (Criteria A, B & H)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Moonee Valley - Moonee Valley Heritage Overlay Places Review, David Helms Heritage Planning, 2012; Moonee Valley - City of Moonee Valley Gap Heritage Study, Heritage Alliance, 2005;
Other Names	Review,
Hermes Number	29808
Property Number	

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## **Physical Description 1**

Napier Park is 4 hectare (10 acre) public park bounded by Woodland Street, Napier Street, Glenbervie Road and Noble Avenue in Strathmore. The undulating landscape comprises close to 50 different species of naturally occurring grasses, shrub vegetation and mature trees. The most spectacular are the majestic River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus Camaldulensis*) which are a major feature of the park. The National Trust counted over 60 of these trees in 1982, and estimated that 22 of the more 'ancient' examples were around 300 years old. Many were damaged, and some have since died, however their massive trunks provide a habitat for native animals, which are known to include possums, brown falcons, cockatoos and wood ducks.

A rare scar tree demonstrates that this vegetation has been part of Australia's natural and cultural heritage before European occupation. The park's natural, rather untamed setting contrasts with the surrounding inter-war housing. The park largely respects the terms of the deed of gift, being free of intrusive structures and plantings, the exception being the coniferous trees on Napier Street and the new playground equipment on the west side.

### *Condition*

The park and trees are in good condition. Although measures are being taken to maintain and improve the integrity and condition of this remnant, indigenous landscape, it nevertheless appears fragile and vulnerable to risks both natural and cultural.

### *Integrity*

The park and trees are substantially intact as undeveloped bushland; however, the planting of coniferous trees and particularly the recent construction of a children's playground are somewhat intrusive and may actually contravene the conditions of Theodore Napier's original Deed of Gift.

*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/>*