
The Avenue Precinct



No 42 the Avenue

Location

The Avenue WINDSOR, Stonnington City

Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO148

Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 1, 2013

What is significant?

The Avenue Precinct, Windsor, is a small residential area of freestanding villas developed through the 1880s (Nos 42, 44 and 46) and 1890s (Nos 48-56).

Elements that contribute to the significance of the precinct include:

. The consistent construction dates.

- . The consistent open setbacks of the villas.
- . The detached form of individual villas.
- . Complete absence of modern infill development and prominent additions and alterations.
- . Modest scale of the residential buildings which are typically of one storey.
- . All of the buildings within the group are of high individual architectural distinction and have been identified as significant buildings under the City of Stonnington Planning Scheme. *Otira* at No 56 is graded A1.
- . Face brick, timber or render materiality and roofscapes with chimneys and pitched roof forms clad in tiles.
- . Intactness of the individual dwellings to their original states. The villas typically survive with their presentation to the street unaltered retaining verandahs and decorative detailing.
- . Garden setbacks to the street which are (with the exception of 46 and 54) free from prominent vehicle accommodation.
- . Most buildings retain original fences to the street.
- . The large plane trees in the median strip along the eastern side of The Avenue.

How is it significant?

The Avenue Precinct, Windsor, is of local historical (HERCON Criteria A, C, & F) and aesthetic significance (HERCON Criteria B, D & E).

Why is it significant?

The Avenue Precinct is of historical significance retaining remnants of one of the earliest and most elegant streets in the former City of Prahran (8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal). Development in the area generally derives from the surge of building construction which swept across South Yarra, Prahran and Windsor during the land boom which continued into the 1880s and beyond (3.3.1 Crown Land Sales, 3.3.3 Speculation and land boomers). The Precinct is unusual for the extent to which development proceeded unabated during the recession of the 1890s. Areas of this level of intactness to their early state are becoming increasingly rare. The Precinct is of some additional interest for its associations with, noted developer, Henry Cheel and with St Matthew's Church.

The Avenue Precinct is of aesthetic significance for its, largely intact, collection of late Victorian buildings. By local standards, these are unusually grand reflecting the stature of their original occupants (8.4.1 Houses as a symbol of wealth status and fashion). Mature plane trees along the eastern side of The Avenue provide a garden setting for the group (8.7.1 Creating leafy suburbs).

The significance of the Precinct is evidenced by the unusually high gradings assigned to buildings within the group (Refer to the Schedule of Gradings appended to this report). Such consistently high levels of individual significance are rarely encountered within Council's Heritage Overlay areas.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - Conservation Review City of Prahran Volume 3: Urban Conservation Areas, Context Pty Ltd, 1993;
Construction dates	1880,
Other Names	The Avenue, Windsor,
Hermes Number	30778
Property Number	

Local Historical Themes

8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal 8.7.1 Creating leafy suburbs 3.3.1 Crown land sales 1840-1850
8.4.1 Houses as a symbol of wealth status and fashion. 10.2.3 Churches as an illustration of key phases in suburban development

As was typically the case in the former City of Prahran, lots were purchased at the Government land sales with a view to subdivision or rapid and profitable resale. The Avenue Precinct is of historical significance for the manner in which it illustrates this aspect of the early development of the Municipality. Large allotments close to the Windsor Railway station and Dandenong Road attracted owners, developers and residents of high social stature. The area retains associations with noted developer Henry Cheel and St Matthew's Church and survives as a remnant of one of the Municipality's earliest and most elegant residential streets.

While the subject area was located in the former Municipality of Prahran, development proceeded in a manner that has more in common, in terms of its open and suburban character and polite middle class residential building stock, with suburban Malvern to its east than working-class Prahran to its west. Streetscapes in the Avenue Precinct are the result of a desire for a suburban life in a detached villa in a garden setting. Development of this type came to typify development in the area before WWI.

The broad heritage precinct illustrates the following themes identified in the Stonnington Thematic Environmental History (Context Pty Ltd, 2006 with upgrades 2009).

- 3.3.1 Crown Land sales 1840-1850.
- 8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal.
- 8.4.1 Houses as a symbol of wealth status and fashion.
- 8.7.1 Creating leafy suburbs.

St Matthew's vicarage illustrates, albeit in a reasonably modest way,

10.2.3 Churches as an illustration of key phases of suburban development.

Physical Description 1

The Prahran Heritage Review (1993) noted,

The section of the Avenue on its east side near High Street still contains a small sequence of single storey (sic) villas with elaborate detailing in their design, typical of the late 1880s. This small group of 1880s survivors provides an example of the former character of The Avenue prior to the major flat and institutional development of recent years.

This situation has not changed substantially during the intervening decades. These dwellings survive in a broad suburban thoroughfare of note for its long stands of plane trees. A tract of these street trees in the median adjacent to the subject sites provides a landscaped setting for the buildings.

The Avenue Precinct comprises a group of eight detached houses of which seven are Victorian villas and the eighth, the former St Matthews vicarage at No 48, is a two-storey dwelling. Buildings throughout the group are very substantial reflecting the wealth and stature of their original occupants.

The earliest buildings in the group (Nos 42, 44 and 46) date from c.1888. They adopt a range of reasonably straightforward architectural forms but are distinguished through their high standards of detailing and generous scales. Nos 50 and 52 date from c.1890 and are likely to be the work of a single developer. They adopt similar asymmetrical forms with rendered exteriors. They are distinguished by decorative quoins and other complex detailing at No 50 and an elegant portico to No 52. To their north No 54 and *Otira* at No 56 are more complex in terms of their detailing and illustrate the rich forms of ornament that became fashionable during the boom period of the later 1880s and early 1990s. The two storey former manse at No 48 is the youngest and most substantial dwelling in the group. It is an ambitious design anticipating later Edwardian architectural developments despite its 1901 construction date.

Front setbacks are typically free from intrusive structures and often retain formal planting arrangements recalling Victorian garden designs. Vehicle accommodation is generally discreet although front setback areas to Nos 46 and 54 are currently used as parking areas. Early cast iron fences over bluestone bases survive on a number of sites. These contribute in a substantial way to the early character of the area.

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/>