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# St. Georges Court Precinct

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## Location

1-15 ST GEORGES COURT, and 7-11 ST GEORGES ROAD, TOORAK, STONNINGTON CITY

## Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO348

## Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

St Georges Court is a small *cul de sac* west off St Georges Road in Toorak. It developed as a result of the 1938 subdivision of a large Federation property in St Georges Road which in turn had been built on the highly significant Toorak House Estate. By local standards, the area exhibits a high population density but encourages a sense of space through a measured approach to landscaping. Housing in the area comprises a mixture of large residences and semi-detached units drawing from a narrow range of stylistic sources and unified by consistent scale, colour and applied decorative elements.

St Georges Court is of regional significance as substantially intact example of an area subdivided immediately prior to World War II and developed by a range of builders and architects for an exclusive clientele. The area's special character and significance derives from the construction of a number of attractive homes and maisonettes during the early war years and the street provides an important illustration of affluent suburban development during this period. Noted architects, including Marcus Martin & Tribe, A. Mortimer McMillan, and Billson & Mewton, were responsible for a number of the homes in St Georges Court. The buildings broadly demonstrate the contemporary regional ideal of the modern house tempered through restrained use of traditional Georgian and Mediterranean form and details.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - City of Stonnington Heritage Overlay Report (Stages 1-5) 1998, Bryce Raworth P/L, 1998;
Construction dates	1939,
Architect/Designer	Billson, Edward F, Mewton, Geoffrey, Tribe, Horace J,
Other Names	Centred on St Georges Court, Toorak,
Hermes Number	31529
Property Number	

## Physical Description 1

St Georges Court is small landscaped *cul de sac* located in Toorak, springing from the west side of St Georges Road between Toorak and Lansell Roads. The area under review comprises 15 dwellings occupying 12 buildings (1-15 St Georges Court and 6, 9, 11 & 11A St Georges Road).

St Georges Court adopts a shallow S-shaped plan upon its gently sloping site. The curve of the road provides interest and a degree of seclusion to residents at the western end of the court. Despite the relatively high density of housing, St Georges Court remains open and spacious.

St Georges Court is surfaced in bitumen with concrete kerbs and crossovers. Pedestrian areas provide planting strips (1.8m) with light plantings of shrubs and trees, concrete footpaths (1.2m) and an additional planting strip adjacent to property boundaries for ground cover and decorative shrubs (0.4m). Roadside landscaping at the eastern end of St Georges Court is precise and orderly, with manicured lawns and hedges but tends towards a less formal approach at the western end of the court. Private gardens in the street are modest by local standards and also reflect the increasing tendency towards informality from east to west. With the exception of the houses on St Georges Road and 15 St Georges Court, which feature high front fences in white-painted or rendered brick, boundary walls are generally low and unobtrusive. They are typically constructed of brick and softened by plantings.

At the western end of the site (9/10 and 11/12) property boundaries are demarcated by plants alone, without fences. Unfortunately the general sparseness of landscaping and the scarcity of mature trees lends visual prominence to the timber power poles and associated overhead wires.

Architecturally, St Georges Court is notable for its large houses and maisonettes. Houses in the estate are invariably of two stories and finished in cement-rendered or white painted brick, with roofs of slate or Marseilles tiles. The area is unusual for its high proportion of semi-detached residences and for the extent to which architects have worked to conceal the multi-unit nature of these buildings with the appearance of large and stately homes.

Stylistically, the estate draws from a handful of broadly overlapping styles. With the exception of the large Modern residence at 11A St Georges Road, housing at the eastern end of the street draws generally from Georgian sources. The addresses facing St Georges Road present formal Georgian facades to the major thoroughfare and establish a vocabulary of details that extend into the Court. These include bay and elliptical windows, ornamental balustrades and timber shutters. The purest and most refined Georgian Revival building occurs at 13 St Georges Court but neighbouring buildings retain the flavour of the style in less academic structures. Towards the western end of the street, housing draws its inspiration from popular Mediterranean sources. Houses in this area are simpler in terms of their massing and their applied detail, reflecting the influence of modernism and the concern of contemporary architects to achieve a polite, climate responsive regional expression. Variations in character and detail in the streetscape are reconciled through consistency of scale, the colour and texture of exterior surfaces and by the presence of decorative shutters which sit with equal ease amid Georgian formality and the casual

Mediterranean styles.

Every building from the original development has survived intact. New York, including the rendering of the red brick residence at 13 St Georges Court and the painting over the clinker brick exterior of 9/10 has generally worked to enhance the character of the original development.

The house at 6 St Georges Road faces directly onto the entrance to St Georges Court. The broadly Mediterranean character of this house appears to result from a substantial reworking of a c. 1875 house during the 1930s. Although not part of the original St Georges Court subdivision, this building plays an important role in closing the vista from within the court, and complements the interwar character of the precinct.

## **Local Historical Themes**

8.1.3 The end of an era - mansion estate subdivisions in the twentieth century 8.4.1 Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion

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*For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>*