
ROBERTS STREET



. Roberts Street, looking north from Forrester Street, Essendon Roberts Street.JPG

Location

29-59 & 44-60 ROBERTS STREET, ESSENDON, MOONEE VALLEY CITY

Municipality

MOONEE VALLEY CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO459

Heritage Listing

Moonee Valley City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - March 31, 2021

What is Significant?

29-59 and 44-60 Roberts Street, Essendon, a residential area comprising one Victorian house built 1888-c.1892 and otherwise interwar Bungalows built c.1928-35 on the 1888 Buckley Park Estate subdivision, is significant.

The following features contribute to the significance of the precinct:

. the Victorian dwelling at 37 Roberts Street constructed in c.1892.

. the interwar bungalows and Old English revival style dwellings constructed between c.1928 and 1935, as shown on the precinct map.

. The overall consistency of built form (asymmetrical massing, prominent street-facing gables, jerkin-head gables, projecting timber-framed windows, some with bow or bay windows, with weatherboard and shingle walls and gable ends).

. the good degree of intactness to its key interwar phase of development.

. the landscape qualities of the streetscape, characterised by houses with consistent form, setbacks and garden settings, wide lawn nature strips, and mature street trees.

The Victorian dwelling at 37 Roberts Street is individually significant for the evidence it provides of the first phase of subdivision before the 1890s Depression.

The houses at 29, 33, 35, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 53, 55, 57, 59 and 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58 and 60 are Contributory. Non-original alterations and additions to the Contributory houses are not significant.

The front fences at 29 and 35 Roberts Street contribute to the significance of the precinct.

The houses at 31 and 51 Roberts Street are Non-contributory to the precinct.

How is it significant?

The Roberts Street Precinct, Essendon, is of local historical and representative (architectural) significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

Historically, this precinct is significant for the evidence it provides of the intensive suburban development that occurred during the interwar period in the parts of the municipality that were at some distance from the main transport corridors. The Roberts Street precinct illustrates the widespread suburban development in the interwar period that was encouraged by the expansion of the public transport system and other services. Built in c.1892, the Victorian dwelling at 37 Roberts Street is historically significant for the evidence it provides of the first phase of subdivision. It is a largely intact single-storey symmetrical, block-fronted (Ashlar boards) timber dwelling, retaining many original features, including: the U-shaped, slate hip roof, pair of rendered chimneys with moulded cornices, paired eaves brackets, central door and fenestration to the principal elevation, and verandah detailing. (Criteria A and D)

The houses in the Roberts Street Precinct are significant as representative of popular styles of the 1920s, predominantly timber Bungalows, with a smaller number of later interwar architectural styles, namely the Old English revival style. Both house styles demonstrate the principal characteristics of their type. The bungalows feature asymmetrical massing, prominent street-facing gables, jerkin-head gables, projecting timber-framed windows, some with bow or bay windows, with weatherboard and shingle walls and gable ends. The Old English revival duplex features typical clinker brick, brick gable ends and arched openings, tall brick chimneys. The Precinct is enhanced by the consistency of built form and good degree of intactness to its key interwar phase of development. The visual cohesion is enhanced by the landscape qualities of the streetscape, characterised by houses with consistent form, setbacks and garden settings, wide lawn nature strips, and street trees. (Criterion D)

Theme

6. Building towns cities and the garden state

Heritage Study/Consultant Moonee Valley - City of Moonee Valley Stage 1 Heritage Gap Study, Context PL, 2013; Moonee Valley - Moonee Valley 2017 Heritage Study, Context, 2019;

Construction dates	1888, 1928,
Other Names	Houses, precinct,
Hermes Number	196426
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

29-59 & 44-60 Roberts Street, Essendon, is a residential area comprising a group of interwar bungalows and one Victorian house (at 37 Roberts).

Roberts Street is oriented on a north-south axis between Keilor Road at the north and to Buckley Street at the south end. The subject area comprises one block of Roberts Street, between Mary and Forrester streets.

Roberts Street is a relatively narrow road with concrete kerbs and guttering. It has very wide nature strips on both sides with large spans of lawn planted with mature Ash (*Fraxinus* sp.) on the west side, and a mix of Ash and Brush Box (*Lophostemon confertus*) on the east side, planted after 1945. Concrete footpaths run adjacent to the property boundaries. There are driveway crossovers to most properties, with a corner crossover to the property at 29 Roberts. The front fences at 29 and 35 Roberts, timber frame with woven wire fences and gates), are in-keeping with the period of the dwellings and may be early.

The houses are all detached with consistent setbacks. On the west side, the houses are set behind mature gardens, many with one or more specimen trees. Some of the houses are partially screened by the street tree canopies. The east side of Roberts Street, where the powerlines are located, has less regularly occurring mature street trees and consequently has a more open feel.

Of note is the Victorian house at 37 Roberts Street, built c.1892; the first in the subdivision and the only house until c.1925. It is a single-storey symmetrical, block-fronted (Ashlar boards) timber dwelling, with its original U-shaped, slate hip roof, pair of rendered chimneys with moulded cornices, and paired eaves brackets. It retains what appears to be an original verandah with cast iron frieze and posts with Corinthian capitals. The verandah roof has a central gable with decorative infill to the gable end. A pair of tripartite windows flanks the four-panelled central timber door with side and highlights.

The other houses are predominantly variations on the theme of interwar Bungalows. They comprise modest, single-story mostly timber dwelling, asymmetrical in plan, many with original terracotta tile roofs (replaced at 29, 33, 35, 54 and 56 Roberts).

The roof forms vary, but all are typical of the interwar Bungalow. Some have gable roofs with prominent street facing gables (33, 53), jerkin head gables (43, 46, 57, 60 and 58), others have a transverse gable roof with a small gable protruding through the roof plane or projecting to contain the verandah (29, 35, 39, 45, 54), hip and gable combinations (42, 46, 48, 50, 56), and hip roofs (44, 47, 49, 52, 55). Gable ends are in-filled with timber strap work or shingles.

A number of the houses feature projecting windows of different kinds: there are bow windows at 55 and 57 (both with shingles) and bay windows at 29, 33, 35, 41, 46 and 54. Windows are timber framed and generally double-hung sash, some with a projecting box frame. Some houses have front windows with stylised geometric leadlight glazing to the upper or both panes, seen at 29, 33, 35, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 53, 55, 57, 46, 52, 54, 58 and 60.

Verandahs mostly have brick balustrades with different column treatments, which is typical of the interwar bungalow. There are a number of hip or jerkin head roofed Bungalows with a central porch of heavy masonry, distinctively buttressed at 43. Verandah columns include grouped timber posts, single moulded columns or in groups, but mostly tapered masonry piers on a brick or rendered balustrade, some with clinker brick detail.

The dwellings at 35 and 55 Roberts Street, appear to have been built to State Savings Bank of Victoria designs for timber-framed dwelling houses, published in 1920 by chief architect G Burrige Leith. The dwelling at 35 Roberts most closely resembles the design for Type 9, while the dwelling at 55 Roberts includes the basic form and features of Type 47, but with a lower ridge line (SSB 1920).

There is a brick duplex in the Roberts Street precinct constructed in the Old English revival style, at 48-50 Roberts Street, with typical elements of the style, including clinker brick, brick gable ends, arched openings, and tall brick chimneys.

There is one postwar dwelling at the northern end of the precinct, at 59 Roberts Street. It is a modest brick bungalow with transitional elements (such as an Art Deco 'waterfall' chimney). While built later than the predominance of housing stock within the precinct, it has a similar form and setback that is sympathetic to the overall character of the precinct.

31 Roberts Street is a double-storey clinker brick dwelling with steeply-pitched, tiled gable roofs. The dwelling comprises two main bays, one setback and with a lower ridgeline than the other, with a brick porch with balcony above located at the intersection of the two bays. A pair of multi-paned French doors at ground level and multi-paned casement windows to the second storey articulate the front elevation of the larger of the two bays. A 'third' bay is created by the single-storey garage built in the same form, materials and detailing as the house. Comparison with a 1928 MMBW plan shows that the house replaces an earlier asymmetrical bungalow, named 'Hedley', with a protruding canted bay and verandah, and that it was close to a mirrored version of the neighbouring house at 33 Roberts.

51 Roberts Street is a single-storey face-brick dwelling with a tiled hip roof and square brick chimney. The style of the chimney and the roof form indicate that the house may have been built during the interwar period. However, the fenestration and front verandah are later additions, making it difficult to read the style of the house. The incorporation of a large, hip-roofed face brick double garage as a front projecting wing to the dwelling, conceals much of the dwelling and obscures the legibility of its form.

Overall, the visual cohesion and integrity of the precinct is good, especially on the west side. Most of the dwellings are largely intact with good integrity, retaining key details characteristic of their architectural style and original fabric. Some of the houses have additions, infilled verandahs for example, but these do not detract from appreciation of the style, form and materials of the original.

A small number of houses have prominent second-storey or clearly visible side additions, but the original form of the dwelling and key stylistic details remain clearly legible from the street. Visual consistency is provided by the consistent setbacks, garden settings, and the high number of houses built to a similar style in the interwar period over a relatively short time span of less than a decade. The gardens and mature street trees enhance the visual cohesion and aesthetic qualities, in particular on the west side, where the houses appear almost secondary to the tree canopies and gardens.

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/>