

## Electra Street Heritage Precinct



Electra Street Heritage  
Precinct, Hobsons Bay  
Heritage Study 2006



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### Location

Electra Street (part), Ferguson Street (part), Parker Street (part) and Pasco Street (part) WILLIAMSTOWN, Hobsons Bay City

### Municipality

## Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

## Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO4

## Heritage Listing

Hobsons Bay City

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## Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is Significant?

The Electra Street Heritage Precinct, which comprises all land in HO4 and generally includes properties with a frontage or side boundary to Electra Street, Williamstown.

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How is it Significant?

The Electra Street Heritage Precinct is of local historic, social and aesthetic significance to the City of Hobsons Bay.

Why is it Significant?

Historically and socially, Electra Street is an integral part of the broader Government Survey precinct and is significant for illustrating the significant civic and residential development that occurred in Williamstown during the nineteenth century. It is notable for the number of pre-1860 dwellings, which are among the oldest group of houses in the metropolitan area and also for the strong associations of the institutional and ecclesiastical buildings with the establishment and fostering of the Williamstown community during an important formative phase of development in the nineteenth century. (AHC criteria A4, D2 and G1)

Aesthetically, Electra Street is significant as a relatively intact example of nineteenth and early twentieth century residential area, which is distinguished by its group of public and church buildings. Notable elements of the historic character of the precinct include:

- The group of public buildings, which were designed by noted early Melbourne architects and share many architectural characteristics.
- The relatively intact nineteenth century street layout, which includes substantial, established street trees within the gravelled verges.
- The strong definition of the intersection of Electra and Pasco Streets by major building elements - the Tudor House and the former Wesleyan Church.
- The unifying effect throughout the precinct of groups of predominantly Victorian and Edwardian era houses with common or similar characteristics of design, siting and scale that creates cohesive and homogeneous streetscapes. Many are externally intact and others, although altered, still retain their distinctive form and siting and hence contribute to the precinct. These dwellings are complemented by the Interwar bungalows at Nos. 53 & 57, which are amongst the best examples of this style in Hobsons Bay.

(AHC criterion E1)

On this basis, the following places contribute to the significance of this precinct:

- Electra Street (odd) 3, 5, 9-17, 21-25, 39, 41, 55-57 and 65
- Electra Street (even) 2, 6, 8-12, 16, 26-36, 44-48 and 52-70 (inclusive)

Please note that some heritage places within this precinct may also have an individual citation in this Study.

Heritage Study/Consultant   Hobsons Bay - Hobsons Bay Heritage Study, Hobsons Bay City Council, 2006;

Construction dates                1850,

Hermes Number                    22431

Property Number

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## Physical Description 1

This precinct generally includes properties with a frontage or side boundary to Electra Street, Williamstown. It is a predominantly residential area, however, there is notable group of church and institutional buildings between Pasco Street and Melbourne Road. Despite some inappropriate postwar infill development Electra Street remains a remarkably intact late nineteenth and early twentieth century streetscape. Key elements include:

§ The visually prominent institutional and church buildings, which include:

- The imposing Mechanics Institute and the adjacent Masonic Temple, both built to the front boundary in related Classical Revival styles.
- The former Wesleyan Church (now St John's Uniting Church) complex at the corner of Pasco Street, which includes the Victorian Gothic Church and Manse, both constructed in basalt, and the Edwardian-era free kindergarten.

§ The cohesive and homogeneous nineteenth and early twentieth century residential streetscapes, which comprise houses that share the following common characteristics:

- simple single or double fronted forms of single storey scale.
- detached siting parallel to the frontage with similar front and side setbacks.
- predominantly horizontal weatherboard wall cladding, although the street also contains a number of basalt and rendered dwellings.
- pitched hip and gable roof forms.
- verandahed forms.
- punched fenestration occupying less than 50% of the wall surface.

The predominant building style is Victorian, but there are notable individual Edwardian and interwar examples that are related in terms of their materials, scale, and siting; Nos. 55-57 are among the best examples in Williamstown of interwar bungalow attic residences. Few front

fences are original, but most are low and many are in a related reproduction period style such as timber pickets.

§ The early roadway layout in sections of the street that comprises:

- the remnant mature exotic street planting comprising Elm trees on the east side and Plane trees on the west side within the gravelled road verge.
- a strip of stone bordered, originally macadamised and now asphalt roadway in the centre of the road reserve.
- asphalt paved footpaths.

(Concrete kerbing has replaced the original bluestone guttering.)

The lower scale of intervening residential development enables visual links to be established between the institutional and church buildings which have long been associated with community organisations in Williamstown. As with a number of streets in the Government Survey precinct there are views to the north into Ferguson Street, in this case to the significant former Punshon's Federal Stores.

## **Integrity**

Integrity

Since Electra Street was originally identified by the *City of Williamstown Conservation Study*, a contributory dwelling at No. 45 has been demolished and there have been alterations to other contributory places. However, the overall precinct still maintains a high level of integrity.

## **Usage/Former Usage**

Context

An integral part of the Government Survey precinct, with typical nineteenth and early twentieth century character that is distinguished by the prominent group of public buildings.

## **Historical Australian Themes**

*Principal Australian Historical Theme(s)*

Making Suburbs, Developing Cultural Institutions and Ways of Life

## **Physical Description 2**

*Associations*

Wesleyan (later Uniting Church), Mechanics Institute, Excelsior Lodge of Industry. (Refer also to individual citations)

*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/>*