
RESERVE - JOHNSON PARK



Johnson Park 12 Bastings Street

Location

12 PALMER STREET, and BASTINGS STREET, NORTHCOTE, DAREBIN CITY

Municipality

DAREBIN CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO191

Heritage Listing

Darebin City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

What is significant?

Johnson Park, Bastings Street, Northcote, acquired by Council in 1913 and 'improved' between 1927 and 1933. Improvements included trees such as the Canary Island Palm row, a children's playground, shrubs and the name Johnson Park. It was created on land that formed part of a suburban subdivision of small lots around 1910 many of which were vacant at the time of Council's purchase. The following elements contribute to the significance of this place:

- the row of Canary Island palms
- an avenue of trees along the diagonal pathways from the northeast and northwest corners to the central feature
- the pathway layout, and specimen trees set within lawn
- mature trees along the perimeters of the park
- stone edging to garden beds; and
- remnants of pergola entry along Bastings Street boundary

Later additions, the fabric of the playgrounds, other furniture and the pathway surfaces are not significant.

How is it significant?

Johnson Park in Bastings Street, Northcote is of local historic significance to Darebin City.

Why is it significant?

Historically, Johnson Park, Northcote is significant as an representative example of the early parks set aside in Northcote between 1907 and the early 1930s as a result of Council's 1906 resolution to set aside as parkland in the early twentieth century to secure such places in the interests of the health and recreation of present and future Northcote citizens. Its surviving early features provide representative evidence of the program of beautification of Northcote's parks associated with its jubilee celebration in c.1932-33. Later layers of improvements including mature trees contribute to the historic character of the park and provide evidence of later fashions and planting preferences. (AHC criteria A.4, D.2)

Heritage Study/Consultant Darebin - Darebin Heritage Study, Context P/L, 2011;

Construction dates 1913,

Hermes Number 27165

Property Number

Physical Description 1

Johnson Park is an inter-war park, which is located on the south side of Bastings Street, Northcote. It has a number of mature plantings, which most likely date from the early 1930s phase of plantings, with other later 'layers' of plantings reflecting the different fashions and planting preferences of their respective eras. The mature plantings comprise predominantly exotic specimen tree used to define pathways or as specimen plantings informally placed in the lawns. The planting palette is typical of inter-war parks in Darebin with Canary Island Palms, Ash, Elms and Oaks species predominating.

The pathway system visible in the 1945 aerial photograph is mostly intact today, although the pathway leading from the central feature to the east perimeter path has been lost and there is a new path leading from the south serpentine path to the west perimeter path. Of the avenue and row plantings visible in the 1945 aerial photograph, the five Canary Island palms (*Phoenix canariensis*) parallel to the Bastings Street boundary clearly remain from this early phase of planting. They are in good condition. Other mature plantings that contribute to the historic character of the park include:

- East boundary of Ash x 4 (*Fraxinus sp.*) alternating with Silky oak x 5 (*Grevillea robusta*)
- South boundary - 2 x mature Elms (*Ulmus sp.*)
- West boundary - 3 x Silky Oak, 2 x Claret Ash (*Fraxinus raywoodii*), 2 x Ash, 1 x Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*), 1 x Peppercorn (*Schinus molle*)
- Specimen trees throughout park - Canary Island Palm, Brushbox (*Lophostemon confertus*), Ash, Casuarina, mature Oaks (*Quercus sp.*) including a Pin Oak, Claret Ash, and conifers (including one deciduous fir)
- Diagonal pathway (northeast corner to centre) - 1 x Ash, 1 x Claret Ash, 1 x Oak
- Northeast corner - Rose garden, beds edged with bluestone

More recent plantings (possibly as a 'like for like' replacement of earlier trees) include 7 x new Plane trees (*Platanus* sp.), which define the circumference of the central feature and a new avenue of 5 Planes along the diagonal pathway from the northwest corner to centre.

A linear garden bed and pathway edged with stone garden beds define the front boundary and early entries to the park off Bastings Street. Elsewhere, lawn and mulched areas form the park's ground cover and pathways are concrete with no edging.

From Bastings Street, there are three possible entries to the park; a central and two side entrances. There is pedestrian access from the park to Palmer Street through an opening in the south boundary. The central entrance in the Bastings Street boundary is marked by the remnants of the pergola structure constructed by 1933 and shown on p.15 of *Northcote Jubilee Celebrations*. Hinge fixtures on the front columns suggest the former presence of gates.

There is a children's playground on the western side of the park, with modern equipment and an earlier children's playground and barbeque area at the Palmer Street end of the park. Otherwise, the park is used for general passive recreation and possibly a thoroughfare.

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/>