
Williams Road Precinct

Location

Williams Road PRAHRAN, Stonnington City

Municipality

STONNINGTON CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO155

Heritage Listing

Stonnington City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on -

The precincts to Williams Road are significant in their illustration of the fine building stock which developed in and graced this street in the period up to the Second World War. They include substantial examples of Victorian, Federation and interwar houses, terraces and flats. While the integrity of the street has suffered in the postwar period, the remaining buildings comprise a fine group and contain a number of buildings of individual significance and character.

Heritage Study/Consultant	Stonnington - City of Stonnington Heritage Overlay Report (Stages 1-5) 1998, Bryce Raworth P/L, 1998; Stonnington - Conservation Review City of Prahran Volume 3: Urban Conservation Areas, Context Pty Ltd, 1993;
Construction dates	1870,
Other Names	Centred on Williams Road, Prahran,
Hermes Number	31194
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

Williams Road springs from the north side of Dandenong Road and is the major thoroughfare between Chapel Street and Orrong Road. It is an important suburban artery, facilitating the movement of traffic between the MacRobertson and Swan Street bridges over the Yarra and the south eastern suburbs. It is subject to high traffic volumes at all times of the day but becomes especially congested during the morning and evening peaks. The area under consideration is predominantly located between and about the busy intersections of Malvern Road and High Street however a second group of buildings located to the north and centred on the intersection of Williams Road and Landale Road is also included.

Williams Road is paved in bitumen with bitumen footpaths and concrete crossovers. The process of road widening has largely eroded the early character of the roadway although efforts have been made to conserve the original bluestone kerbs. In the southern section grass verges no longer exist but Plane trees, set into the footpath alongside timber power poles, provide a dense canopy above this otherwise barren streetscape. The northern section is more hospitable with wider roads and well maintained nature strips which combine with the generous gardens associated with Como House to produce a more spacious streetscape.

The building stock in the area falls broadly into three categories. Remnants of the earliest building stock include the Mount Erica Hotel, a simple two storey building, Chayle, an Italianate mansion, impressive terraces such as those at 131-135 Williams Road (a group unusual for its corner turrets), 100-102 Williams Road and 286-292 Williams Road, and a number of large freestanding two-storey residences such as 78, 80 and 118 Williams Road, which feature elaborate lacework to original verandahs.

Other Victorian building stock tends to be less substantial. Large numbers of asymmetrical villas drawing inspiration from Italianate sources are found throughout the area and survive in long unbroken sequences on the east side of Williams Road north of Spring Street and on the west side of Williams Road south of High Street. The consistency of the northern group suggests that they may be the work of a single builder.

The remainder of the residential stock generally comprises later Edwardian and interwar houses. This group includes a number of impressive interwar residences in and around Landale Road.

Houses in Williams Road exist in varying states of repair and integrity. Few visible additions have occurred and modifications typically take the form of new roof and window materials. In the face of increased traffic volumes, residents have tended towards the construction of large brick fences which, tend to mask the early character of the area. This is especially true in the southern section of the precinct where long, unbroken sections of high walling occurs. In the post war years, a number of new and unsympathetic developments have taken place which also threatens to overwrite the historic character of the area. These predominantly take the form of multi-storey flats such as those found at 105, 107, 130, and 132 Williams Road. This trend continues today with three storey block recently completed at 113 Williams Road. The northern section has suffered less from this type of intrusive development.

Local Historical Themes

3.3 Land Speculation 8.1.3 The end of an era - mansion estate subdivisions in the twentieth century 8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal 8.2.1 Mansion estates and the high ground

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/>