
West Richmond Precinct



West Richmond Precinct.JPG

Location

Hoddle Street and Erin Street RICHMOND, YARRA CITY

Municipality

YARRA CITY

Level of significance

Included in Heritage Overlay

Heritage Overlay Numbers

HO338

Heritage Listing

Yarra City

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - January 1, 2014

What is significant?

The West Richmond precinct, comprising the houses, flats, commercial and industrial buildings constructed in the period from c.1855 to c.1945, is significant. The following buildings and features contribute to the significance of the precinct:

- The houses, flats and other buildings constructed between c.1855 and c.1945 and shown as Contributory, or Individually Significant on the precinct map.

- The former Relova Redressing Laundry and the former Australian Automatic Cigarette Paper Company Pty Ltd in Hoddle Street.
- The West Richmond Railway Station complex including the mature plantings.
- The overall consistency of building forms (pitched gabled or hipped roofs), materials and detailing (walls of weatherboard or face brick or stucco, prominent brick or render chimneys, post-supported verandahs facing the street set out on two levels as required with cast-iron detailing and timber detailing for Federation/Edwardian-era houses), and siting (small or no front and side setbacks except in certain streets).
- The original front and side fences to many houses.
- The contrast between the grand housing on Richmond Hill with the more modest working class housing on the flat areas around York Street.
- The nineteenth century subdivision pattern comprising regular allotments served by rear laneways.
- Traditional streetscape materials such as asphalt pathways and bluestone kerb and channel and bluestone laneways, including the unusual stepped laneway off Highett Street.

The following buildings and places are Individually Significant to the precinct: the West Richmond Railway Station complex: 7 & 25-27 Bowen Street; 33 & 45 Egan Street; 2-10, 15-27, 18-22, 26, 39-53, 57 & 67 Erin Street; 23, 44, 46, 50, 55, 68, 69 & 70 Highett Street; 129, 139, 151-157 & 167 Hoddle Street; 64, 66 & 128-130 Lennox Street; 2-6, 3, 9-15 Muir Street; 16-18 Normanby Place; 33 Smith Street; as well as HO256 - 1 Egan Street, HO257 - 29 Erin Street, HO266 - 117 Hoddle Street & 2A Egan Street, and HO267 - 171 Hoddle Street.

Non-original alterations and additions to the Contributory or Individually buildings shown on the precinct map, and other houses and buildings are not significant.

How it is significant?

The West Richmond precinct is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Yarra.

Why it is significant?

The precinct provides tangible evidence of the key phases in the residential development of Richmond from the time of earliest settlement in the 1850s to the inter-war period and demonstrates how the areas closest to Melbourne town were the first to be subdivided and developed. It is also important for demonstrating an important phase of development in the late interwar period, which was characterised by industrial and higher density residential development. The precinct is of note as a vivid illustration of how class distinctions were reflected in the design and location of housing from the earliest time of settlement in Richmond. The substantial mansions and villas in and around Erin Street, in particular, demonstrate the early importance of Richmond Hill as a suburb favoured by wealthy and the elite, overlooking the working class housing that developing on the flat areas around Smith and York streets. (Criteria A)

The precinct demonstrates the principal characteristics of residential areas in Richmond that were largely developed prior to World War II and are comprised of predominantly Victorian era housing, supplemented by Edwardian and interwar infill, with commercial buildings in small groups and on corner sites. Overall, the intactness of the building stock to the period prior to World War II is very high and creates visually cohesive and consistent streetscapes that are complemented by traditional public realm materials such as asphalt footpaths and bluestone kerb and channel. (Criterion D)

The Richmond Hill area within the precinct has aesthetic significance as an enclave of grand Victorian houses, which enhanced by its hillside topography, mature plantings and unusual urban elements such as the obliquely-sited West Richmond railway station, and a stepped lane off Highett Street. The aesthetic qualities of the buildings in the precinct are enhanced by traditional streetscape materials such as asphalt footpaths, bluestone kerb and channel and bluestone laneways. Erin Street is notable as a grand nineteenth century streetscape containing of some of Richmond's most substantial late nineteenth century houses, most with extravagant 'Boom era' decoration and many retaining original front and side fences. At the centre of the precinct is the former 'Elim' mansion, still set within its grounds, which is a local landmark. Highett Street is also notable the distinctive historic landscape character created by the elevated siting of the houses on the south side with generous garden setbacks, which is very rare in Richmond. (Criterion E)

The Richmond Hill area within the precinct is historically significant for its associations with various eminent Victorians and others who lived there and were important in the development of Richmond. (Criterion H)

Heritage Study/Consultant	Yarra - Heritage Gaps Study: Review of remaining 17 heritage precincts from the 2009 Gaps report, Context Pty Ltd, 2013; Yarra - City of Yarra Heritage Review, Allom Lovell & Associates, 1998; Yarra - Richmond Conservation Study, John & Thurley O'Connor, Ros Coleman & Heather Wright, 1985; Yarra - City of Yarra Review of Heritage Overlay Areas, Graeme Butler & Associates, 2007;
Construction dates	1850,
Other Names	West Richmond Precinct,
Hermes Number	73454
Property Number	

Physical Description 1

The West Richmond precinct contains some early Victorian-era residential sites but the majority of the housing is from the late Victorian-era and Edwardian-era. As noted in the history, the Richmond Hill section contains predominantly grand houses and villas, including some mansions with a smaller amount of more modest housing. By comparison, the northern section around York Street almost exclusively contains modest working class housing.

As with other heritage precincts in Richmond the development themes revolve around strong a Victorian-era residential core matched here by Edwardian-era development and with inter-war as visually related infill, allowing the area to be largely built-up by the start of World War II.

The precinct is comprised of various subdivisions comprising lots with varying frontage widths. Housing is both detached and attached, but usually has similar form (hipped and gabled roofs, front verandahs, parapets), materials, ornament and siting, creating visually cohesive streetscapes. However, there are also some more heterogeneous streetscapes (e.g. Hoddle Street, Smith Street) that illustrate the various phases of development over time.

The Victorian houses include both detached and attached examples, the latter as duplexes or rows. Many of the duplexes lack an expressed party wall or fire-wall divisions between houses and house roofs, as Richmond lay beyond the control of the Melbourne Building Act.

The late Victorian houses often demonstrate Italianate influences such as asymmetrical massing with a faceted bay, stucco wall finish (interpreted as false Ashlar boards on the timber houses) or polychromatic brickwork (e.g. nos. 15 & 17), as well as the rich ornamentation such as cast iron verandahs, rendered chimneys and stucco decoration to parapets and end walls including scrolls, masks, consoles and urns that characterises boom era housing. This is particularly evident in the Richmond Hill area.

The Federation houses demonstrate the transition between the late Victorian to the Federation/Edwardian styles often having the symmetrical form of the former and the simplified decoration and red face brickwork of the latter. The early Edwardian houses carry on the block-fronted form of the Victorian houses, with a transition to turned timber verandah posts and red-brick chimneys. Later Edwardian houses in the precinct are a mix of timber and face brick. They include a number of duplexes, large and small, gable-fronted cottages, and double-fronted, asymmetrical houses of a substantial size. Gables are decorated with scalloped weatherboards, half-timbering or ornamental trusswork.

The Queen Anne influences is also evident in some houses through the asymmetrical planning, hip roofs with prominent projecting gables facing the street, half timbering to the gable ends, verandahs with ornamental timber frieze or valance, tall brick and render chimneys with terracotta pots, and casement sash windows (sometimes with coloured toplights).

Interwar buildings range from gable-fronted timber bungalows to flats and factories in the Streamlined Moderne style.

Area A: The Richmond Hill

The Richmond Hill area, which comprises the part of the precinct extending from Bridge Rad to Highett Street, contains housing predominantly dating from the mid to late Victorian period, with a smaller number of houses from the early twentieth century. Erin Street is especially notable for the large villas and terrace rows, particularly on the north side, and the south side west of Normanby Place. No fewer than 27 places are Individually Significant; most of the houses are highly intact and many retain original front and side fences. The former 'Elim' (also known as 'Yooralbyn') mansion and its grounds on the north side at no.29 (now part of Epworth Hospital) is a landmark within the precinct. Another notable house is no.15, which is an early and exemplary example of a Victorian polychrome brick villa.

To the south and south of Erin Street, Moorhouse Street, Muir Street, Lennox Street and Normanby Place contain slightly less grand houses on smaller allotments. They include single and double storey terrace rows, some with extravagant boom-era decoration and detached single and double fronted villas. As in Erin Street many houses retain original front and side fences, which enhance the aesthetic qualities of the area. Bowen Street, by comparison, contains some relatively modest cottages, including attached pairs with undivided roofs (e.g. 15-17 and 25-27).

Highett Street contains dwellings from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. The streetscape is notable for the slightly elevated siting of the dwellings on the south side above the street, most with very generous garden setbacks, which contain some mature plantings - the Canary Island Palm at no.58 is a notable specimen. By way of contrast, the dwellings on the north side of Highett Street have much more typical small front setbacks. The inter-war Kingston Hotel is a local landmark.

One distinctive aspect of Highett St is a stepped side lane that runs off the street up the hill to the south, an element more typical of inner Sydney suburbs.

At the western end of Highett Street the West Richmond Railway Station is situated within the dog-leg created by the road realignment and terminates the vista looking west along the street. The Edwardian era brick station complex is complemented by mature landscaping including Canary Island Palms and Pepper Trees.

Of the early twentieth century houses, some are in the Queen Anne style - for example, 1 Freeman Street, 2 Jika Place, 3 Muir Street, and 44, 46 and 51 Highett Street.

Area B: York Street and environs

This section of the precinct comprises Peers and Smith streets, York Street between New and Lennox streets, Shelley Street between Garfield and Smith streets and the west side of Lennox Street between Smith Street and just south of Peers Street. It is mostly a residential area with nearly half of the houses dating from the Victorian era and nearly a quarter from the Edwardian-era (Butler, 2009). Lennox Street contains several existing and former commercial uses.

The street configuration in the precinct is typically that of ad-hoc development with narrow streets such as Peers Street placed as if a rear service lane for York Street but also having house frontages.

The precinct contains some houses that appear to date from the early Victorian period (c.1855 to c.1875). They include simple double-fronted timber cottages with steeply pitched gable or hip roofs (10, 35 & 48 Smith St, and 97 York St) and one rendered brick house with a hip roof clad in slate (39 Shelley St). All of these houses have been altered, but all still retain their characteristic early form and, occasionally, siting with either a very small (e.g. 10 Smith) or very large (97 York) front setback. Some retain early detailing such as the cast-iron frieze to 10 Smith St.

The late Victorian houses are typically single or double fronted cottages or houses, constructed of timber or brick, with hipped roofs and rendered brick chimneys. They are mostly detached, although some single fronted houses form attached pairs (76-78 Lennox St) or small rows (68-72 Lennox St and 40-46 York St). The Italianate influence of the late Victorian 'boom' era is exemplified in houses like 11 Smith Street with its symmetrical verandahed style, tripartite windows and bi-chromatic chimney brickwork, and the stuccoed terrace row at 40-46

York Street with its unusual raised arched parapet entablature. Two unusual Victorian-era houses at 1 New Street and 2 Peers Street, which are both built hard against the street.

Also of note are the late Victorian houses at the eastern end of Egan Street including 'Perseverance', a two-storey freestanding symmetrical Italianate bi-chromatic brick terrace house. 'Longton' and 'Trentham' the two-storey attached in the Italian Renaissance Revival style at nos. 3-5, and the Italianate house at the south corner of Hoddle Street, which retains original stables at the rear.

Lennox Street contains a number of commercial buildings including the double storey shops and residences at nos 46-48. At the York Street corner, the simply detailed All Nations Hotel is a local landmark. Opposite this is the Edwardian-era Mahoney's shop & residence, which is a fine, two-storey, early Edwardian corner red brick shop with unusual decoration, some residual Boom characteristics and a Jacobean influence. It includes surviving shop front, stables and a rare early, cantilevered verandah. Another early timber shopfront with recessed central entry survives at 80 Lennox Street

The single-fronted cottages of the Federation period (e.g. 22-26 Smith Street and 90-94 York St) are almost indistinguishable from the late Victorian houses in terms of their form and detailing.

The Edwardian-era is represented by the well-preserved gable-fronted timber cottages at 16-20 Smith Street, and the brick attached pair at 79-81 York Street. A notable Edwardian-era house is 33 Smith St, which is described as being a 'Transition style building featuring Victorian and Edwardian elements: the projecting gable features, timber strap work on roughcast, and a wavy barge board' (Hermes). Also in Smith Street is the attached pair at 6-8, and the house at 40 Shelley Street, which are fine and intact examples of the Queen Anne style.

The inter-war period is seen at 15 Smith Street, a modest gable-fronted Californian Bungalow style weatherboard house, and the larger more articulated 27 Smith Street.

Area C: The Hoddle Street edge

This includes all the properties along Hoddle Street. The development along Hoddle Street illustrates key phases in the development of Richmond from first settlement to the mid-twentieth century.

The first phase of settlement is represented by some houses that date, in part, from c.1855 including the Individually Significant house at 139 Hoddle Street (built in stages) and the altered house at 145 Hoddle Street, once part of a row of four similar houses between Highett Street and Cross Street shown on early maps (now Freeman St)

The high status of the 'Richmond Hill' during the nineteenth century is demonstrated by the quality of houses to the south of Freeman Street, which include richly decorated Late Victorian 'boom' era terrace row 'Hillside Terrace' at nos. 155-59, the very intact Italianate villa at no.167 and 'Urbrae', the mansion at no.171-83.

The recovery of the early twentieth century is demonstrated by several single and double fronted houses, including some that illustrate the transition from the Victorian style. For example, the Edwardian-era house at no. 99 is a well-proportioned double fronted brick residence, symmetrical in plan, with coupled windows and notable verandah decoration with cast iron elements. Another interesting, although altered, single-fronted house at no.123 retains an unusual Art Nouveau parapet. Adjoining it on the south side are two relatively intact double-fronted cottages.

Interspersed amongst these early houses and grand villas are blocks of interwar flats. They include 'Graham Court' at the south corner of Jika Place, the former 'Honiton Flats' at the south corner of Freeman Street and 'Urbrae Flats' at the south corner of Erin Street. Of these, 'Honiton Flats' is the most architecturally interesting, being a well-resolved example of the Streamlined Moderne style. In contrast, while the other two blocks exhibit some Moderne influences (e.g. horizontal glazing bars to the windows) they are far more conservative.

Also dating from the interwar period are two factories. The former Relova Redressing Laundry at no.129 is a landmark building in the Streamlined Moderne style. Although now converted to apartments it retains key elements of the original design including the striking circular tower. The smaller former Australian Automatic Cigarette Paper Company factory at no.103-05 also retains original Moderne detailing, which includes 'Boomerang' in Art Deco script set vertically within the piers at either end of the building. 'Boomerang' was the brand of the cigarette papers manufactured by the company.

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/>