

Mount View Court Precinct, Burwood



Location

1 – 5 Mount View Court

Review

Andrew Ward's Whitehorse Heritage Review 2001 identified Mount View Court as a potential Heritage Overlay Precinct. Graeme Butler's City of Whitehorse Heritage Review: Heritage Overlay Precincts 2002 confirmed the precincts worthiness for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay.

History

Unless otherwise referenced the following historical information is derived from Graeme Butler's City of Whitehorse Heritage Review: Heritage Overlay Precincts 2002.

The first township in the Parish of Nunawading was Burwood, then known as Ballyshanassy. Proclaimed in 1854, the village was bordered by present-day Gilmour Street, Burwood Highway, Highbury Road and Gardiner's Creek. Ballyshanassy remained the only official township until 1861, when the Box Hill Township was proclaimed.

Tramway extensions in 1916 and 1925 gave rise to an influx of land subdivisions in the Burwood, Box Hill South and Surrey Hills areas. Several were named in honour of the new mode of transport in the area, including the Tramway Estate (1916) in Burwood and the Tram Terminus Estate (1936) in Box Hill South.

Mount View Court in Burwood was created as the end of Mount View Road in 1924: the subdivision was approved by Council in January and declared to the Titles Office by George Parsons in February. It was once part of Allotment B of Crown Portion 46 Parish of Nunawading and was a further division of lots 2, 3, 4 and 5 of LP 7314. The estate consisted of 11 lots facing Warrigal Rd (then Boundary Rd) and 5 lots in the court.

Bungalow courts were a fashionable feature of some 1920s-30s estates across the metropolitan area, with precedents in the west coast of North America. They were a precursor to widespread use of the residential court planning in new Australian estates post World War Two.

The houses were State Savings Bank bungalows, constructed by the one builder, C. J. Smith Brothers.

State Savings Bank Houses

As in other states, it was the government in Victoria which led the way in providing post-War cheap finance. The Victorian State Savings Bank acted under the 1920 Housing Reclamation Act to extend their lending activities to cater for annual income of no more than £400. A loan of up to £800 could be given, with £50 deposit, but only for an approved design. Repayments could not be more than one-quarter of the borrower's income. State Savings Bank loans meant that the house stayed in the bank's name until the agreement terminated, some 26 years later. A house block in what are today's middle suburbs (outer suburbs then) would cost between £100 and £200. A State Savings Bank approved timber house ranged in price from £550 – £650. In other words, land could be purchased and a house built within the loan maximum with no further

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capital needed, except as an income. Architect A. Burridge Leith created around fifty State Savings Bank designs in Victoria, initially mostly of timber and generally of five main rooms. A sleep-out porch or third bedroom was optional.⁶

A catalogue of houses containing the range of designs was provided by the State Bank, from which the owner could select the design of their house. As a result there are many California Bungalows across Victoria, which have similar forms, materials and detailing. The summary of specifications from the 1927 State Savings Bank Catalogue gives further description of the material, fittings and fixtures used in the houses. Floor plans and elevations for House types No. 9 and 13 are also attached to this report. Type No. 9 is very similar to No. 4 in Mount View Court and Type No. 13 is very similar No. 2 in Mount View Court.

The houses constructed in Mount View Court

Original owners of the five properties in Mount View Court and the years they moved into the property are listed below⁷:

- 1 Mount View Court, Weber, 1928
- 2 Mount View Court, Malloch, 1927/28
- 3 Mount View Court, Waters, 1927
- 4 Mount View Court, Waters, 1927
- 5 Mount View Court, Lee, 1926

Description

The five residences in Mount View Court are located around a central circular green. The residences are all of weatherboard construction and designed in the California Bungalow style. They are all double fronted with central front doors and front porches. The posts to the porches have brick bases, with 1, 2, 3 & 5 having tapered rendered upper sections while No. 4 has twin posts above the brick base. The roofs consist of a main gable and a smaller gable for a protruding front room or porch. Four of the houses have the main roof form parallel to the frontage and No. 1 Mount View Court has the main gable perpendicular to the front of the house. The roofs are clad in terracotta tiles. Windows are timber framed and double hung and three of the houses have bay windows to their front rooms.

The houses at 2, 3 and 4 have side driveways and the houses at 1 and 5 have driveways in the front set back. No 1 has a tall picket fence, 2 and 3 have low picket fences (most likely original), No. 4 does not have a fence and No. 5 has a hairpin wire fence.

Similar forms, materials and detailing, unify the houses but each house is subtly different. All houses are substantially intact in the front elevation and forms. Varying extents of rear additions and alterations have occurred to all of the houses.

Below is a description of the house (interior) given by a former resident of 5 Mount View Court:

- The house had double front doors with leadlight highlights.
- Originally there were two bedrooms, Kitchen, Lounge, Dining Room and Laundry. A sleep-out was built on later.
- The toilet was at the back gate until the sewer was connected and then it was moved to near the laundry.
- The laundry had a wood copper and later it had gas hot water.
- Corner wood fireplaces in lounge and dining room with blue tiles and surround with metal trim and timber mantelpieces.
- Exterior paint colours: Walls cream, windows and doors dark green. Paint brand: Rickshaw Paint.
- Picture rails and doors inside dark stained wood.
- There were double doors from dining room to lounge room and from hallway to lounge room.
- Linoleum floor coverings
- Wood stove in kitchen and also a small gas cooker.

⁶ Butler, Graeme, *The Californian Bungalow in Australia*, Thomas C. Lothian Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1992.

⁷ Pers. Comm. former resident of 5 Mount View Court.

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Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Mount View Court heritage precinct, comprising the court and central green and the properties with a frontage to Mount View Court and including the California Bungalow style houses and other buildings, fences, elements and fabric relating to this style and period.

How is it significant?

The Mount View Court heritage precinct is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Whitehorse.

Why is it significant?

The Mount View Court Residential Precinct is of historical significance to the City of Whitehorse as a good expression of the major growth in housing in Burwood during the immediate post World War One era, as expressed by the Californian Bungalow style housing which was common in that period (Criterion A4 & Criterion E).

The precinct is of aesthetic importance for its unity and intactness. All the houses in the court are similar in form, style, detailing and materials and are State Savings Bank design homes, constructed by the one builder, C. J. Smith Brothers (Criterion E). The Court is an excellent example of the movement by banks across the nation to support homebuyers in providing affordable new house options during Australia's depression years (Criterion B2).

Mount View Court heritage precinct is also of aesthetic and historical significance for its distinctive Bungalow Court form around a central circular green which was a precursor to the cul-de-sac planning widely used in Australia after World War Two (Criterion A4 & E).

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