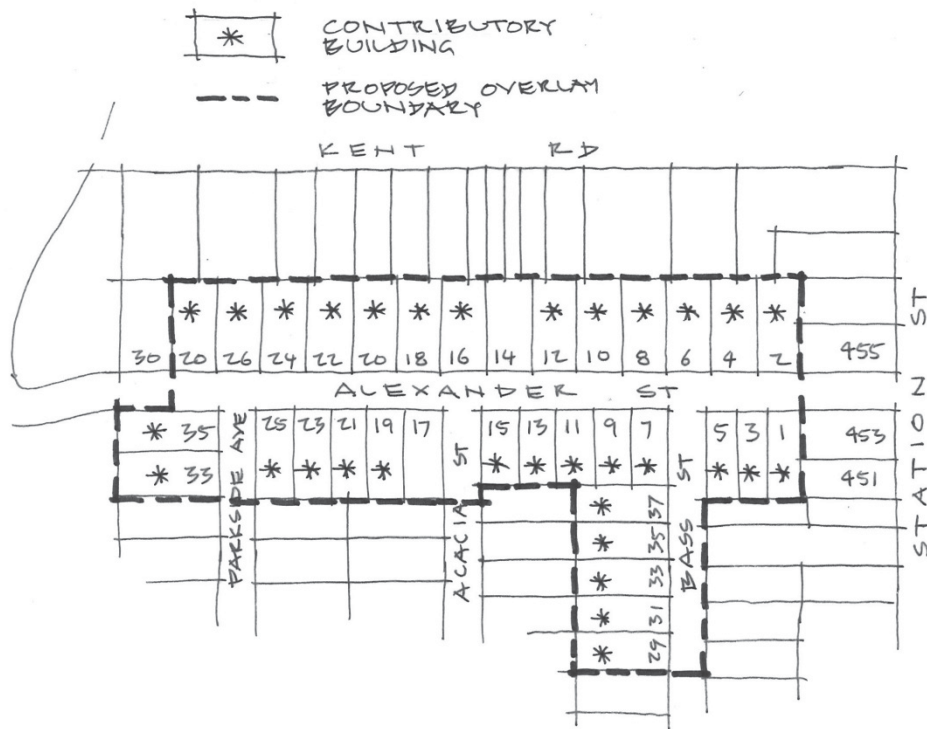


ALEXANDER STREET PRECINCT, BOX HILL; (PART OF FORMER QUEEN'S PARK ESTATE PRECINCT) **HO No 242**

Citation amended 31 August 2015



History

Contextual History

Many of the main roads in the Parish of Nunawading were developed from stock routes under the guidance of the Nunawading District Roads Board which was established in 1857.¹ However it was the extension of the Camberwell railway line from Camberwell to Lilydale in 1882 which resulted in large scale land development and subdivision particularly around the railway stations. A station was immediately established at Box Hill² and this, together with the

¹ A Lemon, *Box Hill*, p 22

² A Lemon, *Box Hill*, p 72

emerging peak of the Melbourne land boom and the accompanying growth in speculative development, prompted the subsequent suburban development of the immediate Box Hill area.

Brickworks were established by Haughton Park Brick Company on land they purchased on the corner of Elgar Road and Canterbury Road in 1884³ and related works continued to operate on the site until closure in 1988.⁴ In 1905 the southern portion of this land was sold to the Nunawading Shire Council for use as a recreation reserve and a swimming pool, Surrey Dive, was developed from an existing deep clay pit.⁵

The Surrey Hills No 1 Reservoir was completed in 1891⁶ to the north of Canterbury Road, allowing the Yan Yean MMBW water supply to be reticulated from there to surrounding homes, providing a boost to residential development. A tramway was opened from the city to Hawthorn and then extended along Riversdale Road to Warrigal Road, Burwood in 1917⁷ and Elgar Road in 1928,⁸ and the railway line was electrified in 1922⁹. The development of the transport network to the east stimulated further growth of the eastern suburbs.

Place History

The Queen's Park Estate was developed on land originally part of Crown Portion 30B in the Parish of Nunawading and purchased by P Griffin in 1854.¹⁰ The estate was subdivided in 1887 and was bounded by Parkside Avenue on the west, adjacent to the Box Hill Brick Company; Alexander Street to the north; Canterbury Road to the south and Station Street to the east. It contained 142 lots, typically 59 feet by 128 feet. The streets were initially regal in name: Victoria Street (later Parkside Avenue), Albert Street (later Acacia Street), Beatrice Avenue (later Bass Street) and Alexandra Street (later Alexander Street).

The estate was advertised for sale as Queen's Park, Box Hill in *The Argus* in December 1887. Business allotments and residential sites were advertised for sale in January 1888, with the land described as being 'the very pick of Box Hill; within five minutes walk of the station'.¹¹ At this second sale the following month 75 remaining lots were offered and at the third sale in May 1888, 47 remaining lots were again offered.¹²

Very little immediate development took place on these residential allotments, indicating the impact of the depression years of the 1890s. By 1905 few houses had been built in this estate, with development concentrated to the north of the estate in Kent Street. In fact Queen's Park Estate was largely developed from 1925 with rapid building occurring from this time. By 1930 the original estate was fully developed, reflecting the immense growth of Box Hill in the 1920s which resulted in the proclamation of the City of Box Hill in 1927. Melbourne

³ B Raworth, 'Former Standard Brickworks Conservation and Management Plan', 2000, p 9

⁴ B Raworth, 'Former Standard Brickworks Conservation and Management Plan', 2000, p 15

⁵ B Raworth, 'Former Standard Brickworks Conservation and Management Plan', 2000, p 10

⁶ A Lemon, *Box Hill*, p 104

⁷ A Lemon, *Box Hill*, p 140

⁸ A Lemon, *Box Hill*, p 159

⁹ A Lemon, *Box Hill*, p 150

¹⁰ Map of Parish of Nunawading in the County of Bourke, 1855

¹¹ Auction Notice, second sale of Queen's Park Estate, 11 February 1888, Batten and Percy Collection, State Library of Victoria

¹² Various Auction Notices, State Library of Victoria

Metropolitan Board of Works Detail Plans of the streets in the original Queen's Park Estate (3106/3107, 1927), clearly illustrate this development.

Description

The recommended Alexander Street heritage precinct is contained within the Queen's Park Estate which is a typical grid subdivision. It comprises Alexander Street, which runs east-west along the north of the estate, and parts of the north end of Parkside Avenue and Bass Streets.

The recommended precinct contains detached, predominantly single storey timber dwellings, which are generally in a highly intact condition. The majority of these were constructed from the mid to late 1920s. Only three of 31 houses in the recommended precinct are non-contributory and the remainder include excellent and intact examples which illustrate the main period of development of this estate. With the exception of 18 Alexander Street (late 1930s), all contributory houses in the precinct had been constructed by 1929.¹³

The earliest houses in the precinct are three late Victorian timber cottages (1, 3 and 5 Alexander Street), which are located on the south side of the east end of Alexander Street. These are typical double fronted cottages with symmetrical front facades, corrugated steel hipped roofs and front verandahs. They appear to have been constructed as identical cottages in the early 20th century. Of the existing housing stock, 4 Alexander Street was the only other constructed by 1915.¹⁴

From 1924 there was rapid development of the remainder of the precinct, with numbers 2, 6-14 Alexander Street built by 1925; 7-13 Alexander Street and 29-37 Bass Street by 1927; and 18-28 and 15-25 Alexander and 33-35 Parkside Avenue by 1929. Development occurred from Station Street and moved west along Alexander Street.¹⁵

Built in the inter-war period, these houses display typical architectural characteristics of the Californian bungalow. They all have tiled roofs and asymmetrical facades with prominent front facing gable ends. The earlier examples are characterised by steeper roof pitches and simple vertical battening to gable ends. The more developed bungalows display low pitched roofs and such elements as double gable ends to the front facade, shingled and/or half timbered gable ends, exposed rafter ends, brick verandah piers and balustrading with render dressings, timber balustrading and verandah detailing and grouped windows with lead lighting or feature glazing bars in the upper window sashes.

There are 3 non-contributory houses at 14, 16 and 17 Alexander Street. Number 16 (c late 1930s) is a timber house of compatible material and scale, however 14 and 17 are later brick buildings which replaced original 1925 and 1928 bungalows respectively.

Upper storey additions have been made to 20 and 22 Alexander Street.

The houses are consistently set back from the street which is lined with Viburnum trees. Fences vary, but are principally timber or wire and are of a consistent low level, typical of the Inter-war period. The street trees (*Viburnum tinus*) appear to be contemporary with the period of development of the street and strongly contribute to the character of the streetscape.

¹³ Shire of Nunawading and City of Box Hill Rate Books, and Sands and McDougall Directories

¹⁴ Shire of Nunawading and City of Box Hill Rate Books, and Sands and McDougall Directories

¹⁵ Shire of Nunawading and City of Box Hill Rate Books, and Sands and McDougall Directories

Comparative Analysis

Due to the extensive development of Box Hill and surrounds in the 1920s, the City of Whitehorse contains large numbers of houses of typical Californian bungalow design. These are scattered throughout the suburbs contained in the municipality and are illustrative of this important phase of development. There are fewer surviving groups of examples in the municipality and it is important to recognise remaining collections. The Alexander Street Precinct is one such example.

Comparative heritage precincts in the City of Whitehorse Heritage Overlay are the Combarton Street Precinct, Box Hill; Thomas Street Precinct, Mitcham and Mount View Court Precinct, Burwood.

Combarton Street Precinct, Box Hill (HO101)

This precinct was largely developed in the 1920s and 1930s, directly to the east of the Alexander Street precinct. It is a larger precinct encompassing some six streets, and contains a high proportion of typical 1920s single storey timber Californian bungalows. These display typical architectural elements, as can be seen in the Alexander Street precinct. It also contains a number of inter-war brick houses in the English Domestic Revival style and a small number of remnant Edwardian houses. There is little non-contributory building and new buildings from the 1990s are sympathetic in terms of scale, set back and materials.

Thomas Street Precinct, Mitcham (HO179)

This precinct contains a highly intact streetscape of late Edwardian and inter-war housing, which represent working class housing typically found in Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham. Historically it represents the transition period in which the Mitcham area developed from a rural to a suburban township. The highly intact character of the precinct contributes greatly to its significance.

Mount View Court Precinct, Burwood (HO180)

This precinct is a small group of five highly intact houses built in a consistent bungalow style from 1926 to 1928 and placed around a central circular green. Historically it reflects the major growth of the suburb in the inter-war period. The highly cohesive and intact character of the precinct contributes to its significance.

The Alexander Street Precinct can be compared with the latter two precincts in intactness. All three precincts retain their building stock in a highly intact form within one street in different suburbs, namely Mitcham, Burwood and Box Hill. The consistent bungalow style of the Mount View Precinct (1926-28) is similar to a substantial part of the Alexander Street Precinct (1925-30).

The Combarton Street Precinct is located in close proximity to the Alexander Street Precinct. It is a much larger precinct which contains a range of house styles, including bungalows which are similar in character to those in Alexander Street. The smaller Alexander Street precinct presents a highly consistent collection of houses designed in a very specific period, namely 1925-1930. It contains an important and intact collection of consistent buildings which are good representative examples of their period.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The boundaries of the Alexander Street heritage precinct, Box Hill are indicated on the accompanying plan. It includes Alexander Street, Bass Street (part) and Parkside Avenue (part). The precinct is the most intact portion of the Queen's Park Estate, Box Hill which was subdivided and sold in 1888, and developed in the 1920s.

How is it significant?

The Alexander Street heritage precinct is of historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Whitehorse.

Why is it significant?

The Alexander Street heritage precinct is of historical significance for its associations with the development of Box Hill during the Land Boom of the 1880s and the 1920s and the effect of the intervening depression of the 1890s. The original subdivision of land, the lack of immediate development and the rapid creation of an inter-war estate in the 1920s, are illustrated in this precinct. [Criterion A]

The Alexander Street heritage precinct is of aesthetic significance for its highly consistent and distinctive collection of intact inter-war houses. A consistency of style, material and scale is seen in this collection of Californian bungalows. Nearly all the bungalows are single storey timber dwellings with tiled roofs, consistent setbacks and similar window openings. The street trees (*Viburnum tinus*) contribute to the Inter-war streetscape. [Criteria D & E]

References

- The Argus*, 17 December 1887, p 2
Auction Notice, Queen's Park Estate, Walker May & Co, Melbourne 1888, Batten and Percy Collection, State Library of Victoria
Auction Notice, Second Sale of Queen's Park Estate, 1888, Dyer Collection of auctioneer's plans, State Library of Victoria
Auction Notice, Third Sale of Queen's Park Estate, 1888, Haughton Collection, State Library of Victoria
Directory of Maps of the County of Bourke, Melbourne, Victorian Shire Map Company, 1892
MMBW Detail Plans Nos 3106 & 3107, 1927
MMBW Detail Plan, Reticulation Area no 580, undated, Box Hill Historical Society
Sands and McDougall Melbourne Directories, 1914-1930
Andrew Ward, 'Whitehorse Heritage Review 2001'
Graeme Butler, 'City of Whitehorse Heritage Review: Heritage Overlay Precincts', 2002-03
City of Whitehorse Council Report, 2004

Historical Images

SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 1888.
On the Ground.
At Three O'Clock.

BOX-HILL. BOX-HILL. BOX-HILL.

QUEEN'S-PARK. QUEEN'S-PARK. QUEEN'S-PARK.

Corner Station-street and Canterbury-road.

BUSINESS ALLOTMENTS and RESIDENTIAL SITES.

The Best Portion in this Rapidly Rising District.
The Very Pick of Box-hill.
Within Five Minutes' Walk of the Station.
Magnificent Views. Pure Air. Perfect Drainage.
The Estate has Noble Frontages to Station-street,
Which Must Eventually Become Valuable Business Sites.

The Safest Investment Ever Offered in the Township of Box-hill.

Purchasers will Double and Triple their Money in a Short Time, as Box-hill Property is Just Now Beginning to Rise. Therefore,
Wait for the Sale of Queen's-park.
Wait for the Sale of Queen's-park.
Wait for the Sale of Queen's-park.

Advertisement for the auction of Queen's Park Estate in *The Argus*, 17 December 1887, p 2



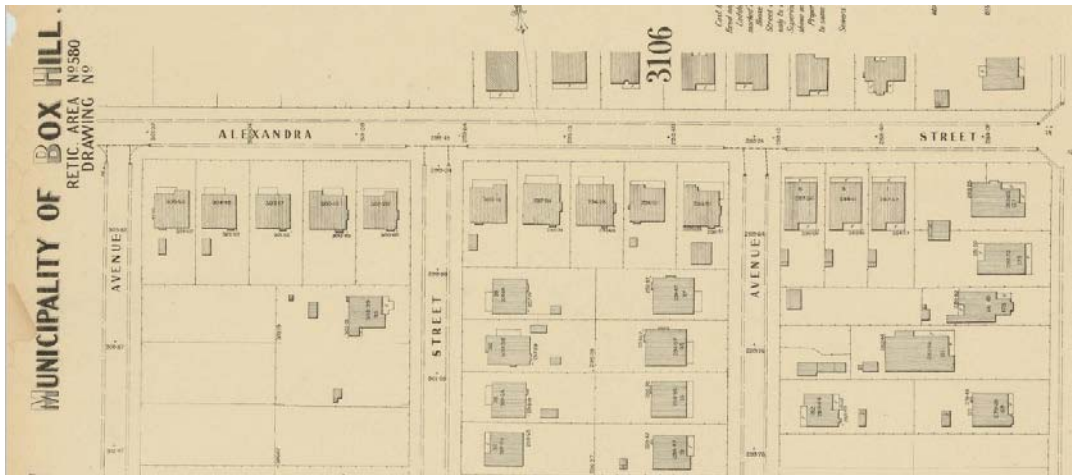
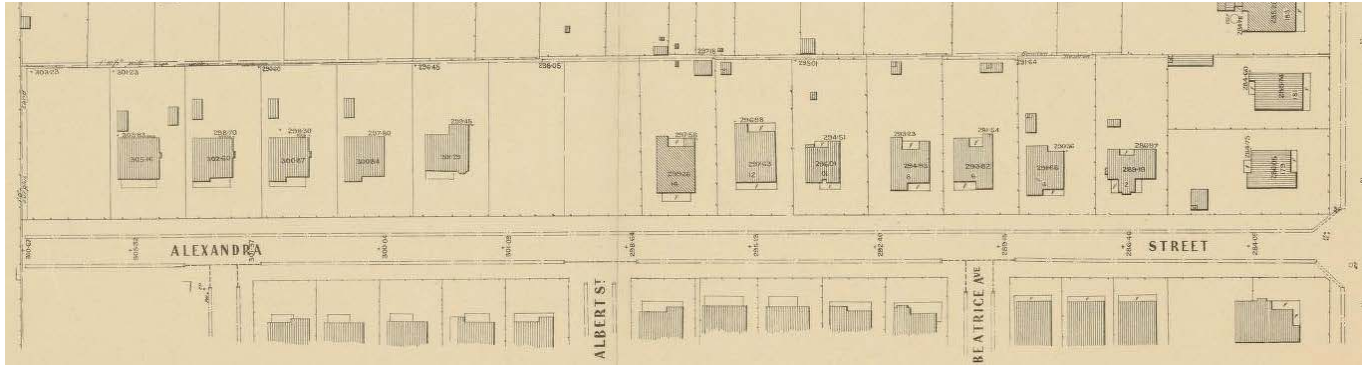
Auction Notice, Queen's Park Estate, Walker May & Co, Melbourne 1888, Batten and Percy Collection, State Library of Victoria



Directory of Maps of the County of Bourke, Melbourne, Victorian Shire Map Company, 1892, showing original street names



MMBW Detail Plan, Reticulation Area no 580, undated, Box Hill Historical Society





MMBW Detail Plan Nos.3106 and 3107, 1927

CONTRIBUTORY BUILDINGS





ALEXANDER STREET-NORTH







			
No:	2	No:	4
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	Edwardian
			
No:	6	No:	8
Style:	Edwardian	Style:	Edwardian
			
No:	10	No:	12
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	Californian Bungalow


			
No:	16	No:	18
Style:	Edwardian	Style:	Californian Bungalow
			
No:	20	No:	22
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	Californian Bungalow
			
No:	24	No:	26
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	Californian Bungalow

			
No:	28	No:	
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	

ALEXANDER STREET - SOUTH

			
No:	1	No:	3
Style:	Victorian	Style:	Victorian
			
No:	5	No:	7
Style:	Victorian	Style:	Californian Bungalow

			
No:	9	No:	11
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	Californian Bungalow
			
No:	13	No:	15
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	Californian Bungalow
			
No:	19	No:	21
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	Californian Bungalow

			
No:	23	No:	25
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	Californian Bungalow

BASS STREET - WEST

			
No:	29	No:	31
Style:		Style:	Californian Bungalow
			
No:	33	No:	35
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	Californian Bungalow

			
No:	37	No:	
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	

PARKSIDE AVENUE - WEST

			
No:	33	No:	35
Style:	Californian Bungalow	Style:	Californian Bungalow