

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Name Hawksburn Railway Station Precinct
Address SOUTH YARRA **Grading** 2007 Local
Building Type Residential Precinct/Railway Platform/ Station/Retail or Wholesale Precinct



Recommended VHR No HI No PS Yes
Heritage Protection

History and Historical Context

The following history has been prepared to illustrate key historical themes as identified in the 'Stonnington Thematic Environmental History' (Context Pty Ltd, 2006, Addendum March 2009).

Lot 33, a tract of about 52 acres between Gardiner's Creek Road (now Toorak Road) and Malvern Road immediately to the west of Williams Road, was offered for sale at the auction of Crown Land in June 1849(1). It was purchased by RA Balbirnie, a wealthy Scot who had settled at Balberino on the banks of the Yarra to the east of Williams Road(2). In February 1851, Balbirnie subdivided much of Lot 33 for resale as portions suitable for 'orchards, vineyards and market gardens'. Most of the parcel was purchased by James Cassell, Collector of Customs for the Victorian Government, and his wife Martha.

Kearney's map of the area notes that two distinct sections had developed by 1857(3).

At the southern end of Lot 33, near the intersection of Malvern and Williams Roads, about 13 acres had been cleared and a small number of buildings constructed including two large buildings to Williams Road and three smaller buildings to

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Malvern Road. The Hawksburn Hotel, destroyed by fire shortly after Kearney's map was drafted, was situated at the corner. However, development beyond the main road frontages proceeded slowly. The Cassells had laid out Motherwell, Hobson and Howitt Streets, the three principle streets in this section of Lot 33, by 1860(4), but the area did not adopt its current form for some decades.

The northern sections of Lot 33 were dominated by James Cassell's, Hawksburn House, constructed in the 1850s(5). The House was accessed by way of a long driveway through formal gardens to Williams Road or a longer track to Gardiners Creek Road via a bridge over a creek. Cassell died shortly after construction of the house although Martha Cassell survived into the 1880s.

Martha Cassell had planned to subdivide her extensive holding as early as 1873(6). However, it was decided that the South Yarra to Oakleigh railway would take a route through her property and large sections of the Lot 33 were transferred into Railway ownership. The line was opened in 1879 with the Hawksburn Station constructed a little to the south of Hawksburn House. Martha Cassell redrafted her subdivision plans to take advantage of the windfall. Around 1880, the long track to Toorak Road became Hawksburn Road and the driveway became Cassell Street(7). Adjacent streets such as Oban Street and Walter Street were created around the same time. The northern sections of the Hawksburn Estate were released in stages over subsequent years.

Between the construction of the station and the recession of the early 1890s, Lot 33 underwent substantial change. Hawksburn Road and Cassell Street to the north of the station were established as desirable residential addresses, as were Motherwell and other streets to the south. Around the creek, which passed under Hawksburn Road through a large drainage channel, more modest cottages were constructed.

This notwithstanding, the MMBW Detail Plan of 1896(8) shows the railway station environs in a partly-developed state. Large areas of land remained in railway ownership; some undeveloped blocks survived in Cassell and Motherwell Streets; and some larger residences retained substantial holdings. Although some, surplus railway land in Cromwell Road, Surrey Road and Barnsbury Road had been released in 1880(9), the Railways Department was slow in divesting itself of land acquired for railway works. Luxton Road immediately to the south of the rail line was not established until around 1897. Some allotments were made available for sale but the economic climate was not conducive to development and the lots remained undeveloped for some years.

When the tramway along High Street was constructed in 1909, the State Government required grade separation between the rail and tram tracks and a deep railway cutting was excavated from Armadale to the Hawksburn Station. The level crossing at Williams Road was built up and a bridge constructed. In 1914, the original buildings at Hawksburn Station were demolished and the present buildings were constructed. Similar rebuilding was undertaken at Toorak and Armadale Stations(10). The redevelopment of the line completed, the last small parcels of railway land were released for sale around 1919(11).

With the economic recovery in the early decades of the twentieth century, the area assumed its current appearance. Edwardian villas, typically of red brick with gable ends to the street, filled large undeveloped areas in and around Motherwell Street, Cassell Street and at both ends of Hawksburn Road. A group of shops in Oban Street immediately to the north of the Station was constructed in 1914 and a number of substantial dwellings on sites to its north were completed. The Luxton Road streetscape, comprising a varied group of Edwardian villas and a second small retail group, dates from the same broad period. The collection of shops and residences that survives around the transportation hub today, was substantially in place by 1920(12) although some isolated remnant sites were developed, often as walk up flats, through the interwar period.

(1) Betty Malone, *Discovering Prahran: Area 3*, p 31

(2) Malone, p34

(3) *ibid*

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

- (4) Land subdivision plan for part of Hawksburn estate, 1873, Stonnington History Collection, Registration No 11082. Malone. p36
- (5) ibid.
- (6) Bruford and Brawn (Surveyors), Subdivision Plan, undated but probably c.1880, City of Stonnington History Collection, Registration No 11238
- (7) MMBW Detail Plans 982 and 983, Prahran, 1896. State Library of Victoria
- (8) Nigel Lewis & Associates, City of Prahran Heritage Review, 1983, p5-3
- (9) Nigel Lewis, op cit, p5-5
- (10) Victorian Railways, Hawksburn and Armadale, sale of surplus land, Plan of Allotments, 1919, City of Stonnington History Collection Registration No: 11131
- (11) Sands and McDougall Directories, 1879-1920.

Relevant Historical Australian Themes

The following themes are drawn from the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006, Addendum March 2009).

3.3.1 Crown land sales 1840-1850

3.3.3 Speculation and land boomers - subdivision from 1880 onwards

3.3.5 Recovery and infill 1900-1940

4.4.2 Developing state railway systems in the late nineteenth century

4.4.3 Twentieth century improvements

7.1 Serving local communities

8.2.1 Mansion estates and the higher ground - middle class estates in Prahran

Description

Physical Description 1

Betty Malone notes, 'In the 1880s (Hawksburn) was regarded as a miniature suburb, much like Armadale and Kooyong. Today it is part of South Yarra or Toorak and shares with them their postcodes. One thing is certain, it has little in common with the western third of the block, which is closer in tone to Chapel Street and which came to house a much less affluent community of people'.

This sense of Hawksburn as a high quality suburb detached from Chapel Street and the surrounding thoroughfares persists. To the north and south of the station, polite streetscapes of substantial villas have more in common with contemporary sections of Malvern than adjacent sections of South Yarra or Prahran.

The area to the north of the Station is centred on a group of large Victorian terrace dwellings in Hawksburn Road but includes other polite Victorian villas to their north and a number of substantial Edwardian villas particularly at the southern end of the street. Workers cottages occupy only the least-desirable, low-lying land adjacent to the creek. Victorian villas at 55-59 Hawksburn Road are of some individual distinction for their decorative parapets as is the grand mansion with freestanding stables at No 1. An intact streetscape of timber dwellings to the south side of Walter Street

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

illustrates the variety of dwellings and streetscapes accommodated within the area. Oban and Cassell Streets similarly retain significant Victorian and Edwardian streetscapes. A long Victorian terrace row at 11-21 Oban Street is of some note, as is a group of freestanding Victorian villas along the north side of Cassell Street. Edwardian dwellings through these streetscapes are reasonably generic but contribute to the broad range of scales, forms and architectural expressions that underpin the character and significance of the northern sections of the precinct.

The immediate station environs retain built form from the redevelopment of the station in the 1910s. The station building, dating from 1914, comprises a central platform building accessed by elevated walkways. It adopts a domestic expression with stucco walls and tiled hipped roofs with tall chimneys with terracotta pots. Walkways and entries incorporate curving corrugated iron roofs while skillion-roofed platform shelters employ ripple iron to form decorative valences. The Station building, platforms and access bridges form a complex of some individual note but, in combination with similar stations at Toorak and Armadale, also contribute to an important group of stations along the line. A small retail development to the north of the Station dates from 1914 and retains its original verandah incorporating the City of Prahran crest. A contemporary, two-storey retail group to the south of the Station retains its original shopfronts. The station, in conjunction with associated retail developments provides the focus for the Heritage Overlay area and the principle pedestrian access between the northern and southern sections of the precinct.

Residential areas to the south of the Station are more consistent, responding to more uniform, gently-sloping terrain. Streetscapes of Victorian and Edwardian terraces, villas, cottages and semi-detached pairs in and around Luxton Road, Motherwell Street and Barnsbury Road survive with a high level of intactness and integrity to their c.1920s state. While buildings generally draw from a range of fairly typical nineteenth and early twentieth century builders' models, a number of notable building such as terrace groups in Motherwell Street and Barnsbury Road, an unusual Edwardian attic storey residence at 2 Barnsbury Road and a very early, two-storey villa at 29 Motherwell Street contribute to the interest of the precinct. Two storey commercial premises at the intersection of Luxton and Williams Road are of some significance in their own right. Some interwar flats contribute to the character of the area.

The broad Heritage Overlay area is largely unaltered in terms of modern infill development or prominent upper storey additions. The early character of some streetscapes, most notably parts of Hawksburn Road and Cassell Street, have been diminished by high fences. However, the area otherwise demonstrates a high level of integrity to its mature c.1920 state.

Comparative Analysis

Based around the Toorak Station in Beatty Avenue Armadale, the northern section of the Armadale Heritage Overlay area (HO130) shares a number of similarities with the Hawksburn Railway Station Precinct. The Armadale area is largely comprised of residential building stock of similar scale, intactness, integrity and architectural expression to that found around the Hawksburn Station. Development of the area was influenced by the construction of the railway line in 1879 and was interrupted by the recession of the 1890s. Consequently, it also retains Victorian built form alongside late-Edwardian developments. The economic resurgence, in conjunction with the redevelopment of the Toorak Station in the 1910s, attracted retail developments along Beatty Avenue which provide a focus for the area. The valued character of both areas survives and both remain highly legible as collections of early residential and retail built form around an early transportation node.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Hawksburn Railway Station Precinct comprises an extensive and substantially intact residential area centred on the

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

Hawksburn Station. Suburban development of the area began with the subdivision of large market gardening allotments from c.1860, gaining momentum with the construction of the Hawksburn Railway Station in 1879 and the subsequent subdivision of the grounds to Hawksburn House. A range of dwellings from modest cottages to substantial two-storey terraces and ornate villas were constructed through c.1880s. These largely survive and form significant elements within the context of the Heritage Overlay area. The station buildings were rebuilt to their current form in 1914 and retail and further residential development was undertaken c.1910s on sites left undeveloped through the recession of the 1890s. The rebuilt station, Edwardian retail and residential developments and some interwar developments contribute substantially to the significance and the mature c.1920 character of the area. Elements which contribute to the significance of the area include:

- Road layout and allotment patterns reflecting the subdivision of local mansion estates and the relationship between and topography and status.
- The open landscaped character of the area brought about through broad streets and footpaths, undeveloped front setbacks and landscape elements both within individual properties and the public realm. Low fences and the general absence of carparking, particularly in areas to the south of the station, contribute to this quality.
- The station buildings and associated platforms and elevated walkways and the extent and form of its curtilage arising from the 1914 redevelopment.
- Built form from two distinct periods with very little modern infill illustrates development during the boom of the 1880s and the resurgence of development after the economic recession.
- Intactness of the area to its c.1920 arising from the low proportion of modern infill.
- Intactness of individual buildings to their original states. Dwellings typically survive with their presentation to the street largely unaltered retaining verandahs and decorative detailing. The area is notable for the absence of prominent additions and alterations.
- The consistent, modest scale of the built form. The station, terrace groups and substantial individual buildings such as those to the south end of Hawksburn Road and elsewhere being notable and valued exceptions.
- The detached form of the early dwellings, other than the terraces, with generally uniform (within each streetscape) front setbacks and modest side setbacks.
- Face brick or render materiality (occasionally overpainted) and roofscapes with chimneys, pitched roofs in slate or other tiles.

How is it significant?

The Hawksburn Railway Station Precinct is of local historical and aesthetic significance. The Station is a significant element at a regional level.

Why is it significant?

The Hawksburn Railway Station Precinct is of historical significance for its capacity to illustrate the development of early retail and residential areas around a transportation node (*Historic Themes: 3.3.3 Speculation and land boomers - subdivision from 1880 onwards, 7.1 Serving Local Communities*). Local subdivision patterns reflect the development of large allotments and demonstrate the relationship between topography and social status with larger villa sites occupying the higher ground near the station and modest cottages built on small, low-lying allotments near the creek (*Historic Theme: 8.2.1 Mansion Estates and the Higher Ground - Middle Class Estates in Prahran*). Building stock dates from two distinct periods with no transitional buildings and illustrates the hiatus in building through the recession to a degree not evident in less intact areas (*Historic Theme: 3.3.5 Recovery and infill 1900-1940*). The station, itself, shows the role of the railway in molding and encouraging the development of suburbs (*Historic Theme: 4.4.2 Developing state railway systems in the late nineteenth century*). It is an element of high individual significance and, in combination with similar stations at Toorak and Armadale, also contributes to a historically significant group of stations along the line (*Historic Theme: 4.4.3 Twentieth century improvements*).

HERITAGE CITATION REPORT

The precinct is of aesthetic significance for its reasonably typical but unusually intact and legible collection of intact buildings and streetscapes. The station building adopts a domestic expression departing from the polychrome appearance of nineteenth century stations. The character of the station is enhanced by retail groups to the north and south which are of some individual significance and combine to create a broader station precinct. Dwellings in residential streetscapes around the station typically reflect polite builders' domestic designs. While these largely comprise straightforward cottages and villas, a number of buildings of particular note provide additional interest. These include: two-storey terraces and villas in Hawksburn Road; Terrace Rows in Barnsbury Road and Motherwell Street; grand residences such as 1 Hawksburn Road, 31-33 Cromwell Road and 29 Motherwell Street; and ornate cottages at 55-59 Hawksburn Road. These buildings adopt a more refined architectural character, beyond that of builders' speculative designs and contribute to the high quality character of the area. A two-storey retail development to the intersection of Luxton and Williams Roads is not typical of built form in the area but is of some individual note.

Assessment Against Criteria

Assessment of the precinct was undertaken in accordance with the processes and criteria outlined in the Australian ICOMOS (Burra) Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Significance.

Recommendations 2007

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Fences & Outbuildings	No
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	-
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

This information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede official documents, particularly the planning scheme. Planning controls should be verified by checking the relevant municipal planning scheme.