
Westbury Close Precinct

Places of individual significance within the precinct that have a separate citation in the Port Phillip Heritage Review with additional descriptive and historical information are indicated in **bold**.

1.0 Thematic Context

Victoria's framework of historical themes

6. Building towns, cities and the garden state: 6.3 Shaping the suburbs, 6.7 Making homes for Victorians

Port Phillip thematic environmental history

5. Buildings and cultural landscapes: 5.2 Shaping the suburbs (5.2.2 Private development), 5.3 Diverse Housing (5.3.3 Suburban bungalows)

2.0 History

The Westbury Close Precinct formed part of Crown allotment 215A in the Parish of Prahran, East of St Kilda, County of Bourke (PP). The five-acre allotment was purchased in the 1850s (by 1857) by T L M Winter, a land agent and territorial magistrate.

Subsequently, the allotment was subdivided in half lengthways, and developed with two substantial residences fronting Carlisle Street: *Kinnord* c.1859 for (Hon.) George Rolfe, merchant and politician, and *Irona* c.1869 for Edmund S Parkes, inspector of the Bank of Australasia (MMD record nos 5556 and 3558).

Both properties changed hands several times during the latter part of the 19th century and into the 20th century. By the early 1890s, *Irona* had been renamed *Willyama*.

In 1894, a hydropathic facility 'for the treatment of all diseases' was established at *Willyama*, with baths provided in a separate dedicated building at the rear (*Prahran Telegraph* 10 October 1894 p.3). Interestingly, between 1914 and 1921 *Willyama* was owned and occupied by Thomas Duff, whose company Thomas Duff and Bros. manufactured many of the early shopfronts that survive in nearby commercial areas.

The MMBW plan (Figure 1), dated 1898, shows the two residences on their substantial grounds, with an orchard at *Kinnord* and a tennis court at *Willyama*.

In November 1922, the two properties were purchased by a group of five local men: Samuel Gorton McGuinness, investor, Arthur Apps, undertaker, Louis Epstein, tailor, Charles Thomas Hackett, plumber, and Henry Hall, plumber (CT Vol. 4676 Fol. 055). Around this time, *Kinnord* and *Willyama* were demolished.

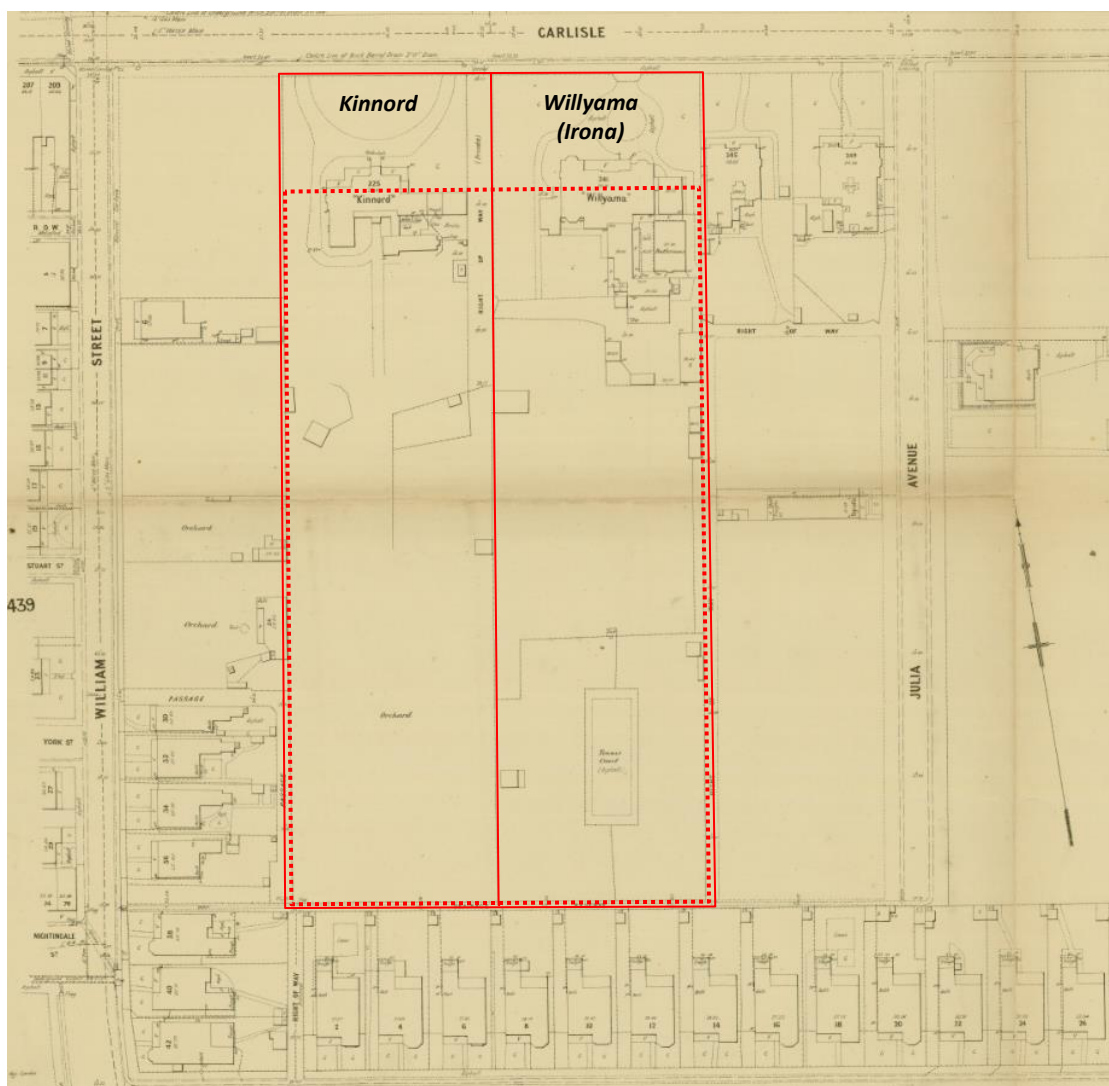


Figure 1 - MMBW Detail Plan No. 1438 (dated 1898) showing Kinnord and Willyama. Indicated are the boundaries of the two properties (solid red line) and the approximate boundaries of the Westbury Close Precinct (red dash). (Source: State Library of Victoria)

The land was then consolidated and subdivided, creating 16 commercial allotments fronting Carlisle Street and 22 residential allotments in Westbury Close. A notice for the December 1922 auction of the 'Westbury Estate' provided the following favourable description:

Gas, water, electric light and sewerage are all on the estate. The Westbury Estate is the heart of a prosperous, fast growing district, and Carlisle Street business centre is going ahead by leaps and bounds, and is sure to rival Glenferrie Road, Malvern and Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick. (Argus 8 November 1922 p.2)

All the residential allotments were developed between 1923 and 1929, mostly with single storey bungalow style houses. The c.1925 photograph (Figure 2) shows that by this time eleven allotments within the precinct had been developed, while the 1931 aerial photograph (Figure 5) shows the street fully developed.



Figure 2 - Aerial Photograph c. 1925 (W R Garrett) showing Westbury Close just over half developed. (Source: State Library of Victoria, H98.129/21)



Figure 3 - Aerial Photograph (dated 1931) showing Westbury Close fully developed. The London Plane trees appear to have been planted. (Source: Landata, Proj No 1931, Maldon Prison, Run 15, Frame 2750)

Three of the allotments (nos 126, 128 and 137) were purchased by local builder Joseph William Fairbanks (and his wife Agnes) who was likely responsible for the construction of these houses (CT Vol. 4676 Fol. 055). The only two storey building, 'Westbury Court' (Figure 4) at no. 147 containing three flats (one at ground floor and two at first floor), was constructed in 1928 by builder R Jones for owner Mrs R Kingham (BP 7225).

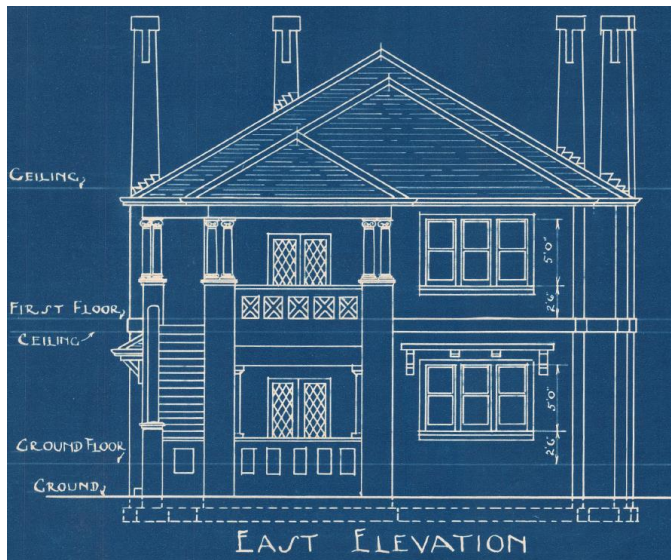


Figure 4 - From the original drawing for 'Westbury Court' 147 Westbury Close, showing the east/front elevation (Source: Council Building File)



Figure 5 - Aerial photograph dated 1945. The street trees are clearly apparent. (Source: Landata, Proj No 5, Melbourne and Metropolitan Area Project, Run 17E, Frame 58014)

References

Certificates of title (CT): Vol. 4676 Fol. 055; Vol. 1622 Fol. 373; Vol. 1504 Fol. 678; Vol. 839 Fol. 701; Vol. 3348 Fol. 465; Vol. 3058 Fol. 459; Vol. 1954 Fol. 746.

Council Building File for 147 Westbury Close

Lodged Plan No 9271 (10 April 1923)

Melbourne Mansions Database compiled by Miles Lewis (MMD)

Newspapers, various

Parish Plan (PP), at Elwood, Parish of Prahran, P81 (13)

Port Phillip Thematic Environmental History (TEH), February 2021

Sands and McDougall's Street Directory (SM)

St Kilda Building Permits Register (BP)

3.0 Description

The Westbury Close Precinct was created from an Interwar subdivision of two former nineteenth century mansion estates. It is comprised of 21 properties of a consistent size on both sides of the street. The contributory buildings, of which there are 19, all date to the Interwar period (built between 1923 and 1929).

The street is lined with mature London planes (*Platanus x acerifolia*), which are most likely contemporary with the houses. The original basalt kerbing and channelling has been retained. The carriageway and footpaths are asphalt, while the crossovers are a mix of concrete (including some which may be original, identifiable by their high aggregate content) or asphalt.

Overall, the streetscape is highly intact and cohesive. There are no visible rear additions, and there are relatively few alterations. There are only two non-contributory places in the precinct; an extensively altered 1920s house at no.135 and a single storey late 20th century house at no.114.

All the buildings in the precinct are free-standing and set back several metres from the front boundary in a garden setting consistent with most contemporary suburban development. Except for the two storey flats at no.147 (Figure 6), all are single storey (some with attics).



Figure 6 - Two-storey flats 'Westbury Court' at no. 147

Front fences are generally low and masonry (face brick or rendered) and many are original. Only the flats at no.147 are without a front fence.

The roof forms are usually either gabled, hipped or jerkinhead (hipped gable), with many having a combination. All the roofs are clad in tiles, mainly terracotta and generally unglazed, and some have

finials. The eave soffits are lined in timber boards, and some have exposed rafter ends. All places retain original chimneys, which are either face brick, roughcast rendered or a combination of both.

Most buildings have asymmetrical façades, but some are symmetrical, or largely so, such as nos 129 and 133 (Figure 7). The walls are of brick construction and are either face brick (red and/or clinker), rendered or a combination of both. Gable ends feature timber shingling, brick detailing or battening. Porches are a standard element and there is a considerable variety in their expression.



Figures 7 & 8 - No. 133 (left) with symmetrical façade and no. 126 (right) with asymmetrical façade.

Windows are timber-framed with double hung sashes. The windows to the front façade are typically grouped and some have decorative glass such as leadlight quarrels/designs or stained glass, or multipaned upper sashes. Bay windows, faceted or curved, are common.

Styles

The houses in the precinct are in the prevailing Bungalow style of the 1920s, with two examples revealing the influence of the Spanish Mission style (nos. 118 and 141).

The Bungalow style buildings have predominately broad gable or hipped gabled roofs, usually with exposed rafter ends to their timber lined soffits. The gable ends typically feature battening (giving a half-timbered effect) or timber shingles, and the walls and other elements are commonly expressed in contrasting brick and roughcast render. Porches are often a prominent element. Overall, the informal design of the bungalows reflects the influence of the Arts and Crafts aesthetic, especially in their combination of 'natural materials'.



Figures 9 & 10 - No. 127 (left) and no. 131 (right), examples of the Bungalow style.



Figure 11 - No. 141 Spanish Mission influence

The Bungalow style as expressed in suburban Melbourne during the Interwar period is a regionalised adaption of (primarily) west coast American bungalow elements and well-established Federation period idioms. The influence of the American 'Californian Bungalow' is indicated by a horizontal emphasis, broad and often tiered gable roofs and prominent porches (often with battered piers). The bungalow was promoted across Australia by building magazines and institutions and was quickly embraced as the preferred type of development for middle-income families, its desirability bolstered by a perceived informality, scope for variation and strong associations with the suburban ideal.

The following table summarises the key details of each original house in Westbury Close that contributes to the precinct.

Address	Year	Details
East Side		
116	c.1926	Bungalow style, transverse ridge, dormer window, exposed rafter ends, contrasting brick detailing in gable ends, curved bay window, lead lighting, original fence.
118	c.1928	Spanish Mission influence, hipped roof, triple arched porch with barley twist columns and medallions, curved bay window with timber shingle skirt above, original fence.
120	c.1924	Bungalow style, return porch, exposed rafter ends, red brick with bands of contrasting clinker brick sailor courses, rendered band, curved bay, original fence (overpainted).
122	1924	'Langunyah' Bungalow style, transverse ridge, prominent porch with exposed projecting rafter ends, indented pattern to gable end, bay window, leadlight diamond quarrels, original roughcast rendered fence (including taller piers to driveway) and metal gates with an unusual design. Built by E Jennings and Sons (Building Permit no. 5619 dated 18 Feb 1924) Allotment was originally in the same ownership as no. 124.
124	c.1927	Bungalow style, jerkinhead roof with transverse ridge, contrasting brick detailing, bay windows, original fence. Allotment was originally in the same ownership as no. 122.
126	c.1924	Bungalow style, prominent porch with exposed rafter ends and battered piers, timber shingling to main gable end and contrasting brick detailing (overpainted) to the other, roughcast render walls (appear overpainted), curved bay windows, original fence.

Address	Year	Details
		Allotment was originally in the same ownership as nos. 128 and 137.
128	c.1924	Bungalow style, triple gable ends with battening to front two, side porch with extension of roof as a hood across the façade, faceted bay window, lead lighting, original fence. Allotment was originally in the same ownership as nos. 126 and 137.
130	c.1924	Bungalow style, projecting porch with jerkinhead roof and pointed arch, timber battening in gable end, bay windows, side garden wall with sloping top, non-original fence.
132	c.1928	Bungalow style, fluted Tuscan order columns to porch, curved bay and squared bay, timber shingling to gable end, contrasting clinker brick banding, original fence.
West Side		
127	c.1924	Bungalow style, finials, corner bay window, timber shingles, lead lighting, original fence.
129	c.1926	Bungalow style (Arts and Crafts type), roughcast rendered walls with brick detailing, bay windows, lead lighting, timber shingling, prominent porch with battered piers and arched entrance, original fence. Allotment was originally in the same ownership as no. 131.
131	c.1927	Bungalow style (Arts and Crafts type), roughcast rendered walls with brick detailing, bay windows, lead lighting, timber shingling, prominent porch with battered piers and arched entrance, original fence. Allotment was originally in the same ownership as no. 129.
133	c.1923	Bungalow style, symmetrical façade, finial, timber shingling to gable ends, bay windows, leadlight diamond quarrels, original fence.
137	c.1925	Bungalow style, timber shingling in gable end, prominent separately massed porch, combination of roughcast and smooth render, geometric detailing, lead lighting, original fence. Allotment was originally in the same ownership as nos. 126 and 128.
139	c.1924	Bungalow style, timber shingling to gable end, multi-paned upper sashes, walls have contrasting roughcast render (overpainted) to upper part and face brick to lower part, original fence (overpainted).
141	1929	Spanish Mission influence, hipped roof, roughcast rendered walls, multi-paned upper sashes, prominent arched entrance with decorative parapet, side garden wall with canted pantiles or similar, original fence. Built by J Evans (Building permit no. 7512, dated 3 July 1929)
143	c.1923	Bungalow style but altered (that is, openings enlarged/changed, walls fully rendered), gable roof clad in terracotta tiles, fence probably altered or postwar.
145	c.1926	Bungalow style, jerkin head roof, curved bay window with timber shingling above, lead lighting, fence probably altered.
147	1928	'Westbury Court' Two storey flats, hipped roof, prominent battered chimneys with roughcast rendered finish, slatted timber soffit, roughcast rendered walls with contrasting smooth render (all overpainted), multipaned detail to some

Address	Year	Details
		windows, Tuscan order columns, no fence. Later alterations (date unknown) include introduction of stairs on north side and infill of balcony openings – broadly sympathetic. Built by R Jones (Building Permit 7225, dated 9 July 1928)

4.0 Comparative Analysis

The Westbury Close Precinct is significant as a highly intact enclave of Interwar period development. Comprised predominantly of Bungalow style houses as well as a block of flats, that were all built between 1923 and 1929 on consistently sized allotments created from the subdivision of two nineteenth century mansion estates. The two storey flats building is modestly sized and has a similar façade width to the houses.

The precinct can be compared to a number of areas and streets within the municipality which contain Interwar residential development and are included within heritage overlays, mainly concentrated in the southern parts of the municipality. Interwar residential development is often interspersed amongst building stock from earlier (Victorian and Federation) or later (Post-war) periods. Where Interwar residential development is dominant, areas typically comprise a mix of building types (i.e. houses and flats) and, like the subject precinct, commonly derive from mansion estate subdivision.

- The St Kilda East: Murchison Street & Wavenhoe Avenue Precinct (HO391). An intact area of mainly Interwar bungalow-style houses built during the 1920s, supplemented by some Federation period houses and Interwar period flats built during the 1930s. The area was formerly occupied by several nineteenth century mansions, two of which survive.
- Eildon Road, which forms part of the St Kilda Hill Precinct (HO5). Comprises buildings of the Interwar period with a high proportion of flats, built on subdivisions created from nineteenth century mansions of which one ('Eildon') survives today.
- Wimbledon and Hennessy avenues area within the St Kilda Botanical Gardens & Environs Precinct (HO7). Interwar period flats and houses (several altered) built within the grounds of two nineteenth century mansions ('Wimbledon' and 'Rothermere') that still remain.
- Heaton Avenue and Burns Street within the Brighton Road (Elwood) Precinct (HO318). Heaton Avenue is probably the most comparable to the subject precinct, having been fully developed in the 1920s with bungalow style houses, but it is a smaller group than the subject precinct, a couple of houses have been considerably altered, and few original fences survive. The Interwar streetscape of Burns Street also includes a few earlier houses (Victorian and Federation) and later development including flats. Like the subject precinct, both streets have basalt kerbing and channelling, and mature plane trees.
- The Elwood-Glen Huntly Rd, Ormond Rd Precinct (HO8). Large precinct with Federation/Edwardian and Interwar residential development, but streetscapes are typically heterogeneous in terms of period and contain a mix of houses and flats.
- Mooltan Avenue Precinct (HO390). A cul-de-sac subdivision in the grounds of a 19th century mansion estate containing an intact group of seven houses all with a Spanish Mission influence built between 1928 and 1930.
- Albion St, Brighton Rd (east side between Albion and Glen Eira), Los Angeles Ct, Maryville St, Monkstadt Ave, Morres St and Somers St within the Brunnings Nursery Estate & Environs Precinct. An Interwar residential area developed on the land that was formerly the Brunnings Nursery which was subdivided in 1926. Mostly houses, but with some flats. Generally intact, but

the period of development is later than the subject precinct, being from the latter half of the 1920s and the 1930s.

The Westbury Close Precinct is distinguished from the other streets/precincts reviewed above by its high proportion of 1920s Bungalow style houses built within a relatively short period and by its highly intact and cohesive streetscape which is complemented by many original front fences and mature street trees. It is like many of the other streets/precincts in that it derives from mansion estate subdivision of the Interwar period.

5.0 Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Westbury Close Precinct comprising 114-132 and 127-147 Westbury Close, Balaclava is significant.

The Westbury Close Precinct derives from the 1922 subdivision of two 19th century mansion estates (*Kinnord* and *Willyama*), which created residential allotments in Westbury Close (and other commercial allotments fronting Carlisle Street which are outside the precinct). The contributory building stock is comprised predominantly of single storey, brick Bungalow style houses, as well as a small two-storey block of flats, all of which were constructed between 1923 and 1929.

The following features contribute to the significance of the Westbury Close Precinct:

- Dwellings dating between 1923 and 1929,
- The consistent subdivision pattern dating to 1922,
- The predominant single storey scale,
- Roof forms (hipped, gabled, jerkin head) and roof cladding, predominantly terracotta (unglazed and glazed), finials and exposed rafter ends,
- Original chimneys, some with terracotta pots,
- Original detailing to gable ends including timber battening, brick detailing and shingling,
- Walls of face brick (red, clinker), rendered finishes (roughcast and smooth) and contrasting detailing,
- Original porches,
- Original timber windows (some with decorative glass or glazing bars) and original timber doors,
- Original low front masonry fences and metal gates and front garden settings,
- Basalt kerbing and channelling, and some original or early vehicle crossovers and driveways,
- London Plane street trees.

The Contributory places are 116-132, 127-133 and 137-147 Westbury Close.

The Non-contributory properties are 114 and 135 Westbury Close.

How is it significant?

The Westbury Close Precinct is of local historical and representative significance to the City of Phillip.

Why is it significant?

The Westbury Close Precinct is of historical significance as illustrative of the suburban growth and consolidation of Balaclava during the Interwar period. It is representative of a common settlement pattern in this part of the municipality where large Victorian properties were subdivided during the Interwar period for residential and commercial development. (Criterion A)

The Westbury Close Precinct is of representative significance as a highly intact enclave of Interwar period development built over a concentrated seven-year period between 1923 and 1929. It is comprised predominantly of Bungalow style houses, including two with a Spanish Mission influence, that collectively display notable cohesion in terms of scale, composition, materials and detailing, with many properties retaining their original low front fences. The flats, the only two storey building, have a similar façade width to the houses. The precinct is enhanced by the consistent subdivision pattern and the street setting, which includes original basalt kerbing and channelling and mature street trees. (Criterion D)

6.0 Recommendations

Excise from HO7 to create a separate precinct heritage overlay.

The following place becomes Contributory to the precinct:

- 122 Westbury Close (PPHR citation 908)

7.0 Assessment

RBA Architects & Conservation Consultants, *HO7 Elwood St Kilda Balaclava Ripponlea Precinct Heritage Review Stage 2, 2021*