

CITY OF GLEN EIRA

AMENDMENT C197

FIELD STREET PRECINCT

STATEMENT OF EXPERT EVIDENCE



Prepared for
The City of Glen Eira
14 September 2020



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A: INTRODUCTION

A1 BACKGROUND & BRIEF

This Expert Witness Statement was commissioned by the City of Glen Eira, for the Independent Panel appointed to consider submissions received in response to the exhibition of City of Glen Eira Council Planning Scheme Amendment C197. This amendment proposes to apply a heritage overlay to the Field Street Precinct, which comprises detached inter-war residences along both sides of Field Street, Bentleigh.

A2 STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

My name is Simon Reeves and I am the Director and Principal of Built Heritage Pty Ltd, a firm of architectural historians and heritage consultants based in Emerald, Victoria. I am an architecture graduate, holding the degrees of *Bachelor of Planning & Design* and *Bachelor of Architecture (Hons)* from the University of Melbourne, conferred respectively in 1994 and 1998.

Since 1998 I have worked full-time as an architectural historian and heritage consultant, initially with Allom Lovell & Associates (1998-2002) and then with Heritage Alliance (2002-2009). In January 2009, I established my own practice, Built Heritage Pty Ltd, to specialise in twentieth century heritage and, particularly, the heritage of the post-WW2 era.

Since forming my own practice in 2009, I have been undertaken large-scale heritage projects for municipal councils, namely the *Shire of Bass Coast Heritage Study (Stage 2): Post-Panel Implementation* (2009), the *City of Boroondara Thematic Environmental History* (2011), the *Balwyn & Balwyn North Heritage Study* (2012-13), the *City of Whitehorse Post-1945 Heritage Study* (2013-14), Stage Two of the *Frankston City Post-War Heritage Study* (2014-15), and the *City of Maroondah Heritage Review* (2017-18). I have completed individual heritage assessments (or other small-scale heritage projects) for the Cities of Ballarat, Boroondara, Brimbank, Frankston, Greater Bendigo, Greater Dandenong, Maribyrnong and Port Phillip, as well as the Shire of Mornington Peninsula. My experience in dealing with heritage issues in local government encapsulates stints as regular heritage advisor to the Rural City of Swan Hill (2002-2009), the Shire of Gannawarra (2002-2009), the City of Brimbank (2003-2004) and the Shire of Bass Coast (2002-2012). At various other times, I have also provided casual or locum heritage advice to the Cities of Maribyrnong, Moreland and Maroondah.

I have appeared as an expert witness in heritage matters on many occasions, including at VCAT hearings, registration hearings before the Heritage Council, and independent panel hearings for planning scheme amendments for the Cities of Bayside, Boroondara, Frankston, Glen Eira, Melbourne, Port Phillip, Whitehorse, Wyndham and the Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

Since 2017, work undertaken for the City of Glen Eira Since has included preparation of a heritage citation for the former Lind House at 380 Dandenong Road, Caulfield North (and involvement in the subsequent VHR nomination and registration hearing), a peer review of an assessment of the former Carnegie Post Office in Grange Road, Carnegie, the citation for the Field Street Precinct in Bentleigh, and, most recently, two more substantial heritage projects: the *City of Glen Eira Thematic History (Refresh) 2020* and the *City of Glen Eira Hidden Gems & Post-WW2 Heritage Study*.

I am currently a member of ICOMOS International, and have, at various other times, been a member of DoCoMoMo Australia, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), the Society of Architectural Historians of Australia & New Zealand (SAHANZ), the Art Deco & Modernism Society of Victoria, the Walter Burley Griffin Society, the Australian Garden History Society and the Robin Boyd Foundation.

A full *Curriculum Vitae* is included as in the Appendix to this statement.

A3 STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

This expert witness statement, and the component tasks of historical research, fieldwork and analysis that underpins it, represents the work of Simon Reeves. There have been no other significant contributors to this statement. With the exception of those whose work or opinion has been quoted and referenced in the text to support my own viewpoint, no other persons have carried out any tests, experiments or investigations upon which I have relied.

A4 DECLARATION

I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.



14 September 2020

B: METHODOLOGY

B1 OVERVIEW

B1.1 Chronology

The following provides a brief chronology of the consultant's involvement in the process that lead to development of a heritage citation for the Field Street Precinct. The following abbreviations have been adopted: BH (Built Heritage Pty Ltd) and CGE (City of Glen Eira).

- 2019 May 23 BH instructed by CGE to prepare a fee proposal for the preparation of a heritage assessment of a streetscape of inter-war housing in Field Street, Bentleigh.
- 2019 May 28 BH provided fee proposal for preparation of a heritage citation for Field Street. CGE subsequently clarified that the brief required only a preliminary heritage assessment, with a recommendation as to whether a full citation was appropriate. The fee proposal was amended accordingly and re-submitted.
- 2019 Jul 1 BH undertakes initial fieldwork survey for preliminary assessment.
- 2019 Jul 3 BH submits draft of preliminary heritage assessment to CGE, including a recommendation that contiguous properties in Bent Street might also be included.
- 2019 Jul 9 BH instructed by CGE to proceed with preparation of a full precinct citation
- 2019 Jul 10 BH seek clarification regarding the possibility of including part of Bent Street, and is advised by Council that there is no objection to those properties being included.
- 2019 Jul 16 BH undertakes supplementary fieldwork, including survey of Bent Street
- 2019 Jul 17 BH submits final version of preliminary heritage assessment to CGE, removing the recommendation that contiguous properties in Bent Street might also be included.
- 2019 Aug 6 BH submits a draft version of the heritage citation to CGE.
- 2019 Aug 8 BH submits final version of heritage citation to CGE
- 2020 Mar 6 BH provided with copies of ten submissions pertaining to proposed application of precinct HO to Field Street

B2 THE PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT

B2.1 Commission

In May 2019, the Consultant was invited by Council to provide a fee proposal for a heritage assessment of a group of inter-war houses in Field Street, Bentleigh. The Consultant initially provided a fee proposal for the preparation of a full-fledged precinct citation, but was then advised by Council as follows:

At this stage, Council will not require a full citation for Field Street - we are more looking for a brief review and data sheet to decide whether it is likely to meet the threshold for local significance... Council will then make a decision whether to proceed with a full citation.

The Consultant duly amended the fee proposal, and resubmitted it.

B2.2 Fieldwork

The Consultant undertook a survey of Field Street on 1 July 2019, which involved recording and photographing the houses in the street, as well as undertaken a limited windscreen survey of the surrounding streets to provide a broader comparative context.

B2.3 Historical Research

The Consultant undertook limited historical research to establish the origins and development of the housing in the street. This comprised reference to the original subdivision plan of 1924, a subsequent MMBW plan of 1928, and listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* for 1945. It was confirmed that Field Street was created as part of a larger 221-lot residential subdivision, which extended between Jasper Road, Bent Street and Hayes Street.

B2.4 Comparative Analysis

A windscreen survey of the surrounding streets that comprised the same pre-war subdivision confirmed that Field Street stood out as a notably intact streetscape of pre-war dwellings. Other streets in the same subdivision generally contained a considerably higher proportion of more recent redevelopment, including post-WW2 apartment blocks (especially towards the south, closer to Bentleigh railway station). It was duly noted that the northern end of Bent Street, where it intersected with the western end of Field Street, appeared to be a more intact streetscape.

B2.5 Assessment and Conclusion

Fieldwork indicated that, at face value, Field Street was an essentially uninterrupted streetscape of detached inter-war housing, of consistent era, form, scale, setback, materials and detailing.

Historical research, while limited, was sufficient to demonstrate that, after Field Street was created in 1924, housing developed rapidly over the next two decades, and all of the blocks had been built upon by 1945. Only one of the original houses in the street had since been demolished, and its replacement was sympathetic in scale and form.

Limited comparative analysis indicated that the Field Street streetscape was far more cohesive than other streets in the same pre-war subdivision, thus making it a rare intact survivor of the era.

As such, the Consultant's initial report concluded as follows:

This preliminary research and fieldwork suggest that the intact inter-war streetscape of Field Street would be an ideal candidate for inclusion on the heritage overlay schedule as a heritage precinct. Consideration might also be given to extending the boundaries of such a precinct further south/west to take in the contiguous portion of Bent Street, which formed part of the same estate and retains a comparably high level of cohesion. The rest of this extensive pre-war subdivision, spanning Vickery, Godfrey, Donaldson, Bruce and Hayes Streets, and part of Jasper Road, offers considerably less cohesive streetscapes.

It was thus recommended that a full precinct citation be prepared. The report appended a single-page Outline Citation, illustrated by two survey photographs and an indicative map showing the likely boundary of the proposed precinct. In the draft version of the report (Figure 1), this map placed a black boundary around those dwellings with their principal frontages to Field Street (ie, excluding the three houses on corner sites at 26 Donaldson, 235 Jasper Road and 237 Jasper Road), while a secondary boundary, in gray outline, indicated the contiguous properties in Bent Street that were suggested for possible inclusion in the precinct.

B3 THE PRECINCT CITATION

B3.1 Commission

In 9 July 2019, the Consultant was instructed by Council to proceed with the preparation of a full citation for the Field Street Precinct. The following day, the Consultant contacted Council to seek guidance on the potential inclusion of contiguous properties along Bent Street. Council advised: "Include Bent Street – there are no zoning concerns or conflicts with that section of the street".

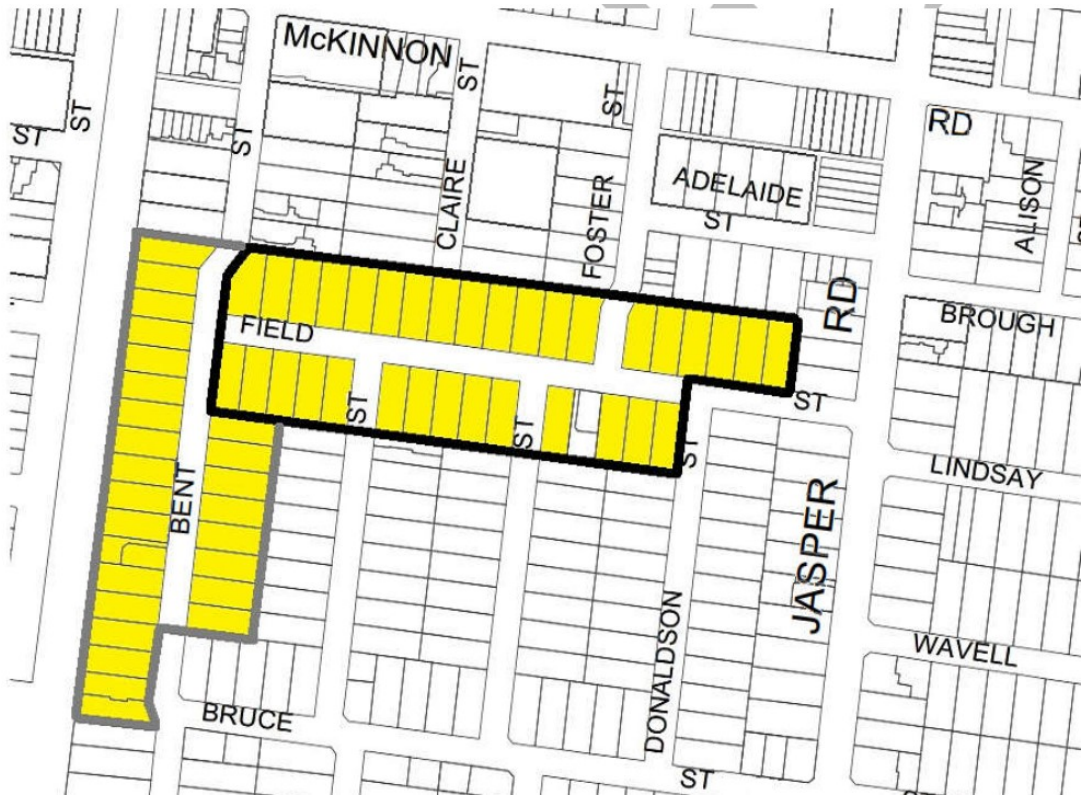


Figure 1: Indicative map of proposed precinct boundary, as recorded in draft version of preliminary heritage assessment (3 July 2019); note suggested inclusion of properties along both sides of Bent Street

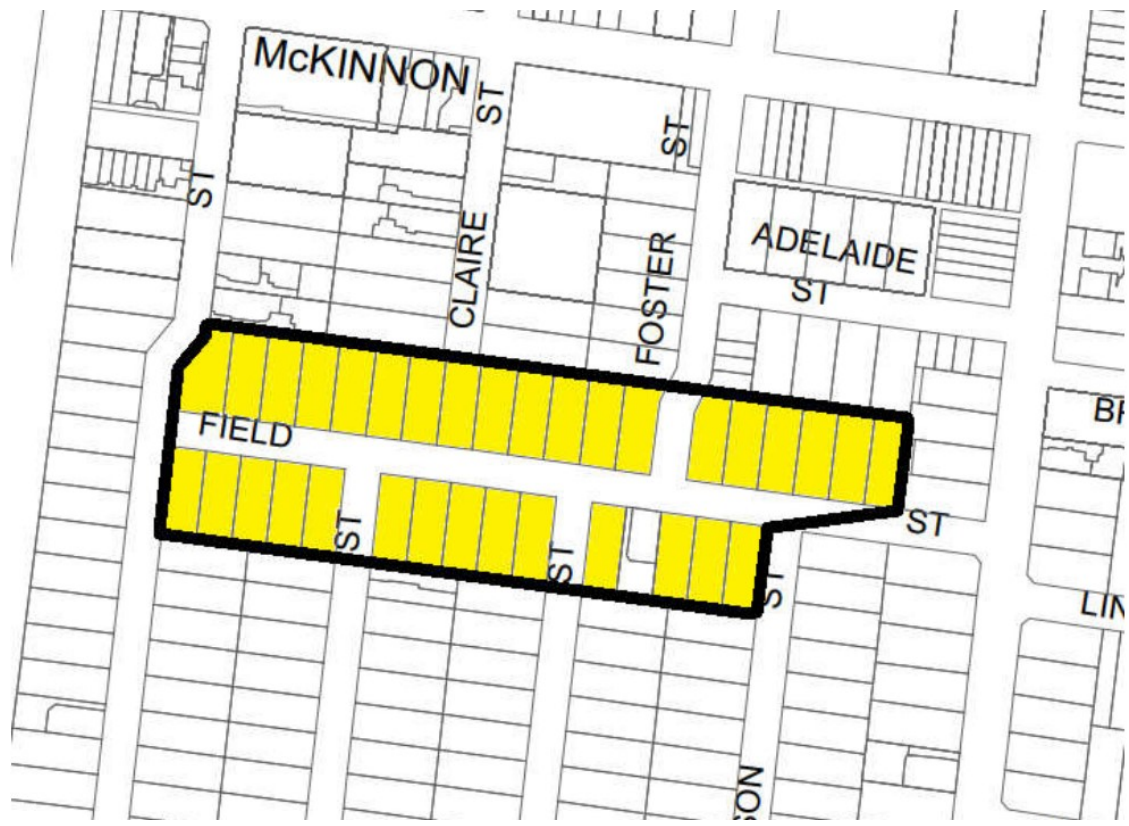


Figure 2: Indicative map of proposed precinct boundary, as recorded in final version of preliminary heritage assessment (16 July 2019); note boundary is now limited only to Field Street

B3.2 Additional Fieldwork

On 16 July 2019, the Consultant made a follow-up site visit to Bentleigh to take more photographs of Field Street as well as a more detailed inspection of Bent Street. In regard to the latter, it was found that the streetscape was less cohesive than previously anticipated, with a number of new buildings in various stages of construction.

Consequently, the Consultant concluded that it was no longer appropriate for the houses in Bent Street to be incorporated into the proposed precinct. Council was advised accordingly, and the draft assessment report was amended to remove the suggestion that Bent Street might be included. The updated report was then re-issued on 17 July 2019.

B3.3 Additional Historical Research

Expanding upon the research undertaken for the initial heritage assessment, the Consultant cast the net wider, consulting a number of other primary sources. A complete search of street-by-street listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory*, from the mid-1920s to the late 1940s, was undertaken to provide a broad account of the chronological development of residential development. This confirmed that the last three houses in the street were erected in the late 1940s and early 1950s (although the last of these had since been demolished).

This directory research was supplemented by reference to municipal rate books (held by the Public Record Office Victoria) for the 1920s, to more accurately chart the street's early development, and to confirm exactly which houses were the first to be built. These rate books also revealed that the subdivision was originally known as the *Garfield Estate*. Further research of archival newspapers confirmed that it was named for the property's former owners, the Garfield Brothers, who ran a market garden there for some years before selling it for residential subdivision in the mid-1920s.

While rate books and directory listings confirmed the names of the original residents of Field Street, reference was also made to electoral rolls, in order to confirm the professional occupations of same. This information was included in the citation to provide a snapshot of the comfortable middle-class white-collar milieu that characterized the street's original residents.

B3.4 Additional Comparative Analysis

The preliminary comparative analysis undertaken in the initial assessment was expanded, with more detailed coverage of how the intactness of Field Street compared to other streets within the extent of the *Garfield Estate*.

As additional historical research had confirmed that the *Garfield Estate* was associated with the sale and subdivision of former market gardens during the early inter-war period, comparative analysis was expanded to place Field Street (and the *Garfield Estate*) in the broader context of other local residential estates of similar era. Several of these estates were identified by reference to real estate advertisements in archival newspapers, and virtual fieldwork (via Google StreetView images) was undertaken to appraise their streetscape intactness in relation to Field Street.

B3.5 Completion of Citation

A draft of the completed citation was submitted to Council on 6 August 2019. This included the same map that had been prepared for the preliminary assessment, showing the heritage overlay covering only those properties with principal frontage to Field Street (Nos 1-37 and 2-30). Council reviewed the draft citation and requested some minor revisions as follows:

- Replacement of the map (with a black outline and contributory properties in yellow) with one that retained the same boundaries but adopted Council's standard colour scheme for heritage precinct maps (ie, blue outline, with contributory buildings in green and non-contributory buildings in purple; see Figure 3);

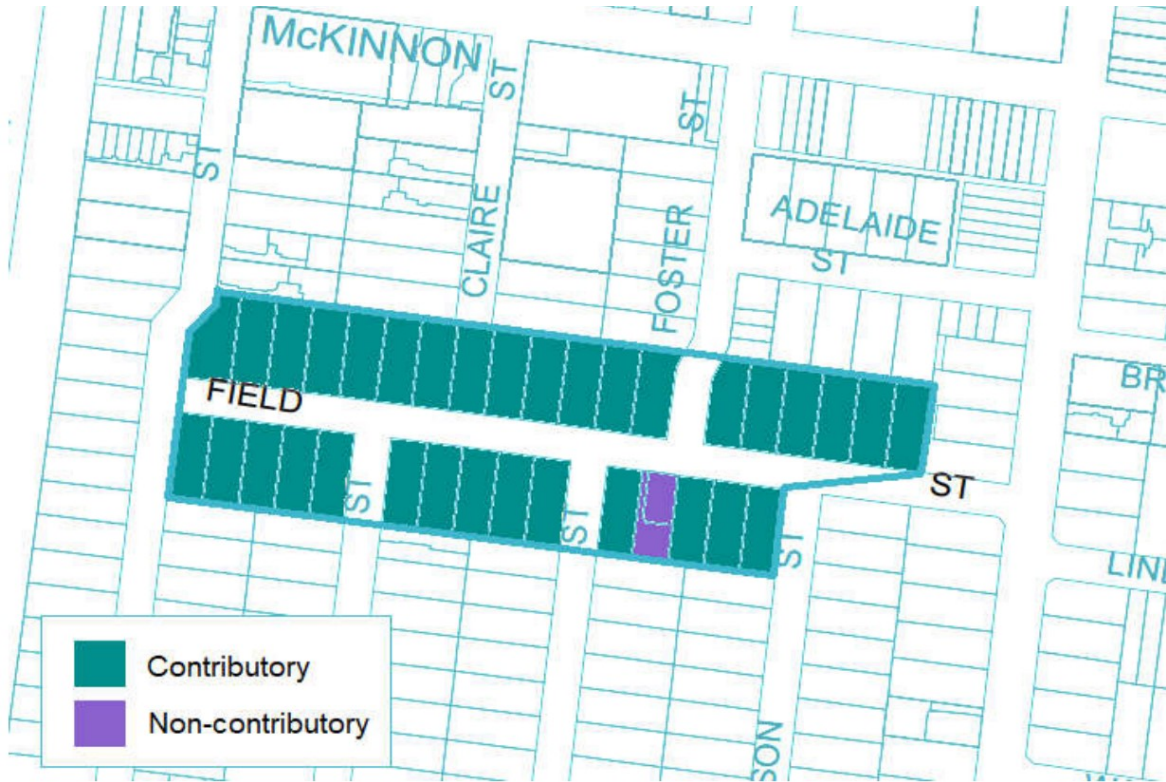


Figure 3: Precinct map as included in final version of heritage citation (17 August 2019), recommending the same boundaries suggested in the preliminary heritage assessment

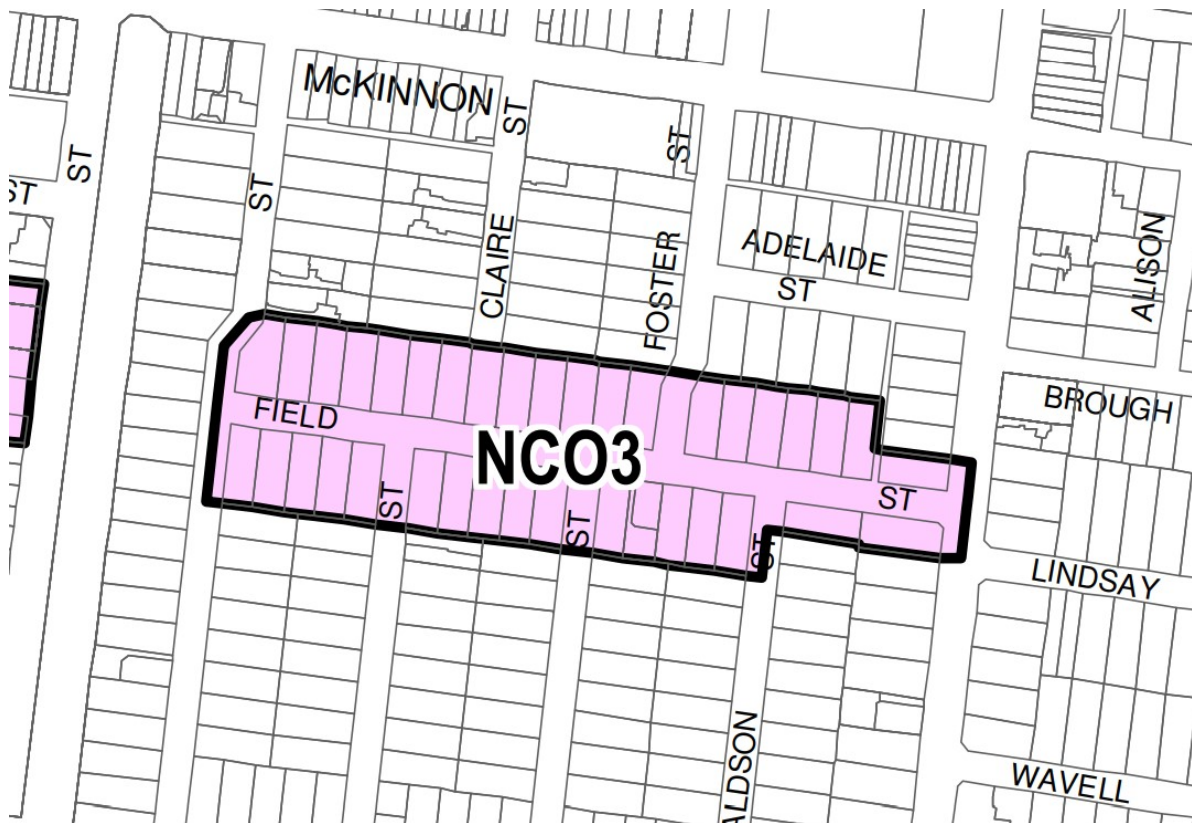


Figure 4: Planning scheme map showing extent of existing NCO3, which includes three corner properties at eastern edge of Field Street, addressed as 26 Donaldson Street, 237 Jasper Road and Jasper Road

- Deletion of comments on the intactness/cohesion of certain inter-war housing estates in the area that were cited as comparators, due to the fact that these areas had recently been assessed by another consultant and recommended as HO precincts.

The citation was updated accordingly and re-issued to Council on 8 August 2019.

B4 RELATIONSHIP TO NCO3

After receiving the draft citation on 6 August, Council advised the Consultant that they had just compared the proposed boundaries of the HO precinct with the boundaries of NCO3, an existing Neighborhood Character Overlay that extended along Field Street (see Figure 4). It was pointed out that the respective boundaries did not correspond exactly, with three corner properties at the eastern end of Field Street (26 Donaldson Street; 235 and 237 Jasper Road) that were included on the NCO but not recommended for inclusion as part of the proposed HO. While acknowledging that the boundaries of the respective overlays did not necessarily have to correspond precisely, the Council asked the Consultant why those three houses had not been included in the proposed HO.

The Consultant provided a detailed response via email, which can be summarised as follows:

- Field Street constituted a cohesive streetscape of houses with their principal elevations to Field Street. This necessarily excluding houses on corner sites with their principal elevations to other streets (ie Donaldson Street and Jasper Road);
- The two houses fronting Jasper Road were not considered to make an important contribution to the Field Street streetscape. The Field Street frontage of the house on the north corner (237 Jasper Road) was dominated by a substantial hip-roofed second-storey addition and a new hip-roofed brick garage built right to the property line. It was not considered that this much-altered frontage constituted an appropriate termination to the Field Street streetscape;
- The house at 26 Donaldson Street also appeared to be altered. The Consultant strongly suspected that the current rendered finish was not original, due to its extremely smooth texture and the fact that its surface projected beyond the line of the window surrounds so that they appeared slightly recessed. This was indicative of a house originally of face brick construction that had been rendered in more recent times.
- The Consultant also posited that, if the three corner houses at 26 Donaldson Street and 235 and 237 Jasper Road were to be included in the precinct, then consideration must then be given to extending the proposed boundary even further, to include other houses along those two streets that might be deemed to be in accordance with the significance of the precinct (eg 233, 239, 241 and 243 Jasper Road, and 20, 22 and 24 Donaldson Street).

Council agreed that it would just proceed with the proposal for Field Street.

C: DETAILED RESPONSES

C1 SUBMISSION 1 (SOUTH EAST WATER)

C1.1 Issues Raised

The submission from South East Water, dated 11 February 2020, stated that the body had no objection to proposed Amendment C197.

C1.2 Consultant's Response

As no heritage (or other) issues were raised, no response is required.

C2 SUBMISSION 2 (EPA)

C2.1 Issues Raised

The submission from the Environmental Protection Authority, dated 25 February 2020, stated that the body had no objection to proposed Amendment C1987.

C2.2 Consultant's Response

As no heritage (or other) issues were raised, no response is required.

C3 SUBMISSIONS 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8

C3.1 Issues Raised

These five submissions, from separate residents of Field Street, are dated between 26 and 29 February 2020. All of them express their support for the proposed amendment, while querying the omission of the corner properties at 26 Donaldson Street and 235-237 Jasper Road.

Submissions 3, 4, 5 and 8 are identical in wording, stating that "I also ask the Council to consider applying the Heritage Overlay to 26 Donaldson Street and 235-237 Jasper Road as well". None of these four submissions refers to the existing NCO3. Only Submission 6 does so, stating that "my only concern is that the new heritage listing excludes three properties that were covered under the NCO (two on Jasper Road and one on Donaldson Street). Each of these properties have [*sic*] boundaries on Field Street and I think that it is important they are included as well, to give the whole street the full protection it deserves".

C3.2 Consultant's Response

The Consultant's rationale for the proposed HO boundary, in respect to its degree of correlation to the existing NCO3 boundary, has been covered in the methodology section (see Section B4).

The proposed precinct was defined to include only those houses with principal frontages to Field Street. At the time of the assessment, it was not considered that the corner houses (with principal facades to the other streets) made a notable contribution to the cohesive Field Street streetscape, where all of the other houses face Field Street.

Concern was also expressed about the intactness of these houses. The house at 237 Jasper Road has major additions to the rear (a large and prominent second storey as well as a hip-roofed brick garage built right to the property line) that, in the Consultant's opinion, overwhelms its Field Street frontage. Physical evidence suggests that the house at 26 Donaldson Street has been altered: the current rendered finish appears to be of relatively recent origin, and it is likely that the house was originally cream brick (with contrasting manganese brick stringcourses and trim), akin to the similar and contemporaneous house on the adjacent site at No 24.

The consultant maintains that, if these two altered houses on corner sites at 235 Jasper Road and 26 Donaldson Street were to be included in the precinct, then consideration would have to be given to the potential inclusion of additional houses further along those respective streets. There would be no clear justification to include only 26 Donaldson Street when the adjacent houses at No 24, 22, 20 (and further along, perhaps as far south as No 14) could be argued to be in accordance with the stated significance of the precinct. The same applies to Jasper Road, where contiguous properties at Nos 233, 239, 241 and 243 might also be deemed contributory to the precinct.

In conclusion, the following points are also made:

- At the start of the project, the Consultant was not briefed to take into account the existing NCO3, much less to recommend a HO that corresponded exactly to it.
- When Council instructed the Consultant to prepare the final citation in accordance with the recommendations of the preliminary assessment (including proposed boundaries), no mention was made of the degree of correlation to the existing NCO3.
- The Council expressed that it had no objection to expanding the proposed precinct to include Bent Street (if deemed appropriate by the Consultant), which would indicate that there was never any imperative for the HO to correspond exactly with NCO3;
- Ultimately, the Consultant does not hold the opinion that NCO boundaries must or should correspond to HO boundaries, as they are two distinctive overlays, with different intents and rationales. We have undertaken work for other municipalities where we have recommended heritage precincts with boundaries that do not correspond exactly with an existing NCO.

C4 SUBMISSION 7

C4.1 Issues Raised

This submission from the resident of 27 Field Street, dated 26 February 2020, opposed the proposed amendment on the grounds that the house has reportedly been much altered. It was succinctly noted that, "I purchased the house a few years ago and there were many modifications to the house. The house is not in its original state. Therefore I request that my property is not included in the heritage list".

C4.2 Consultant's Response

Rate books confirm that the house at No 27 was erected during 1928. At the time of the initial survey on 1 July 2019, the house was noted as single-storey inter-war weatherboard bungalow with gambrel roof clad in terracotta tiles, incorporating a shingled gablet to the street. Its double-fronted street frontage incorporated a full-width verandah with plain timber posts supported by capped brick plinths, and there were boxed windows with timber-framed double hung sashes.

All of these elements are demonstrably in accordance with the defining architectural and aesthetic character of the Field Street streetscape, and particularly the earlier houses dating from the second half of the 1920s. These are catalogued thus in the descriptive section of the citation:

- "Single-storey detached dwellings with consistent scale and setback"
- "Representative of the prevailing bungalow style" (of the period from 1925 to 1930)
- "Of timber construction, clad in conventional weatherboards"
- "Roofs, variously hipped or gabled, are clad with red terracotta tile"
- "Street facades ... asymmetrical, with offset front porches, bays of timber-framed windows, and gable ends infilled with **shingles** and/or strapped cement sheeting" [emphasis added]

- “Front porches are of brick construction, with permutations of piers and dwarf walls variously surmounted by squat Tuscan-style columns, fluted square pillars, or, less commonly, by tapering piers or **plain timber posts**” [emphasis added]

As the house at No 27 clearly demonstrates all of these key characteristics, it cannot be sustained that it is not a significant element within the precinct.

The submitter has alluded to “many modifications” reportedly made to the house, prompting the conclusion that it is “not in its original state”. However, as the specific nature and extent of these modifications have not been revealed, one can only assume that they must pertain to the interior or to the rear of the house, as its street frontage remains substantially intact.

C5 SUBMISSION 9

C5.1 Issues Raised

This submission from a resident of Field Street, dated 2 March 2020, was in support of the proposed amendment. No further matters were raised.

C5.2 Consultant’s Response

As no heritage (or other) issues were raised, no response is required.

C6 SUBMISSION 10

C6.1 Issues Raised

This submission from a resident of Field Street, dated 3 March 2020, was in support of the proposed amendment. No further matters were raised.

C6.2 Consultant’s Response

As no heritage (or other) issues were raised, no response is required.



APPENDIX CURRICULUM VITAE

SIMON REEVES

Qualifications

- 1996-97 Bachelor of Architecture (Hons) (University of Melbourne)
1991-93 Bachelor of Planning & Design (University of Melbourne)

Full-time Professional Experience

- 2009- Director and principal, Built Heritage Pty Ltd
2002-2009 Architectural historian and heritage consultant, Heritage Alliance, Melbourne
1998-2002 Architectural historian, Allom Lovell & Associates, Melbourne

Other experience

- 2013-2017 Lecturer, *Architectural History & Theory 2: Australian Architecture*
School of Architecture & Design, RMIT University
- 2011 Tutor, *Architectural History & Theory 2: Australian Architecture*
School of Architecture & Design, RMIT University
- 2010 Tutor, *Modern Architecture: MoMo to PoMo*
Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne
- 2010 Guest editor, *Architect Victoria* (Journal of AIA Victorian Chapter)
Special issue on post-WW2 Heritage Places (Autumn 2010)
- 2000 Research assistant to Dr Philip Goad [Post-War Sydney Housing project]
Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne
- 1999 Archivist and curator of architectural drawings (Walter Burley Griffin)
Newman College, University of Melbourne
- 1998 Architectural historian [Stephenson & Turner archive project]
State Library of Victoria
- 1998 Tutor, *History of Building Construction*
Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne
- 1995-1998 Assistant to the Building Project Co-ordinator
State Library of Victoria
- 1995 Teaching assistant to Jeffrey Turnbull
Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne
- 1994 Research assistant to Jeffrey Turnbull & Peter Navaretti [Griffin catalogue project]
Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne

Current and former affiliations

- Australia ICOMOS
DoCoMoMo Australia
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
Society of Architectural Historians of Australia & New Zealand (SAHANZ)
Art Deco & Modernism Society of Victoria
Walter Burley Griffin Society
Australian Garden History Society
Robin Boyd Foundation

