HO207, Coonan’s Hill, Pascoe Vale South

Proposed additions to precinct
1-23 Woodlands Avenue, 47 Carrington Street and 48 Walhalla Street
Also, 9-55 Melville Road are transferred to the adjoining HO110 precinct

History

Thematic context
This precinct and the proposed extension are associated with the following themes in the City of Moreland Thematic History (2010):
Theme 6: Building Moreland’s Houses; 6.3 Building during the Boom; 6.4 Building houses in the twentieth century, Early Twentieth Century Estates

Suburban development in Coburg
In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century much of the development in the former Coburg municipality was confined to a narrow corridor adjacent to the railway line and Sydney Road to the south of Bell Street. Outlying areas such as West and North Coburg, Pascoe Vale and Glenroy were characterised by small farms and vacant land well into the twentieth century (Broome, 1987:163).

After the cessation in development caused by the 1890s depression, building in Coburg began to pick up about 1910 (Broome, 1987:179) and accelerated after World War I. As noted by Broome (1987:202):

Suburban development depends on demand for housing, cheap vacant land, local employment, the availability of transport and basic services and the drive of entrepreneurs. By 1920 Coburg was ripe for the process.

In Coburg the demand for housing was created by returned soldiers and encouraged by improvements to transport, which included the re-opening of the railway north to Fawkner by 1914, the electrification of the line to Coburg by 1920 as well as the commencement of private bus routes in the 1920s. Industry was actively encouraged by Council, which designated three industrial areas, and the opening of the Lincoln Knitting Mills on a large site in Gaffney Street in 1919 provided employment for 500 workers, a figure that was doubled in 1920. Further mills followed (Broome, 1987:203-05).

As a result by the mid-1920s new building was at 'fever pitch' (Broome, 1987:207) and the population of Coburg more than doubled in the decade from 1920 to 1930 from 17,000 to 40,000. It was the third-largest suburban rate of increase behind Caulfield and Camberwell and during 1923 and 1924 an average of three houses was built each day in Coburg (Broome, 1987:210).

Precinct history

Early history
The area now known as ‘Coonan’s Hill’ was originally owned by Farquhar McCrae, physician and Justice of the Peace (4 SLV). McCrae was a member of the significant and influential McCrae family, the most famous member being Georgiana McCrae. He built the La Rose farmhouse c.1841, now known as ‘Wentworth House’, 22 Le Cateau Street (2 Broome, 1987:44). Later the area was farmed by Michael Coonan, an Irishman who is listed in the 1847 Melbourne Directory as a ‘carter’ (4 MD, 1847). Coonan owned forty acres, a holding which was typical of the district at that time (3 Broome, 1987:127). The land was part of the Moreland Estate, which was subdivided by the executors of Farquhar McCrae in 1858. Coonan sold around 60 acres but retained five. This latter portion was subsequently sold by his widow and, in 1927, it became Langtree Avenue (5 Burchell, 1995).

In the later 19th century, highly speculative subdivision took place all over the municipality. The Coonan’s Hill area was subject to at least two subdivisions. The ‘Woodlands Estate’, at the western end of the Precinct, was subdivided in 1888 into 594 lots by the Property Building Finance and Investment Society (4 Burchell 1992/3). This area was bounded by Walhalla Street, Coonans Road, Woodlands Avenue and Moreland Road (2 Burchell 992/3).

The ‘Moreland Hill Estate’ was a smaller area located to the east of the ‘Woodlands Estate’, bounded to the north by Woodlands Avenue and to the south by Moreland Road. This land, approximately 90 acres, had previously been owned by Thomas and Jane Saunders (3 Broome 1987:64. Broome states their Reynard
Road farm was 120 acres). The ‘Moreland Hill Estate’ was sub-divided into 20 lots of one acre each and re-subdivided in the early 20th century (9 Burchell, 1992/3).

However, this area was too remote from transport and service and few houses were built before the economic depression of the early 1890s brought a halt to development for over twenty years.

Suburban development in the twentieth century

Historically, the Coonans Hill area developed from east to west, predominantly during the inter-War period. The catalyst for the development of this area was the establishment of the electric tram from the City to West Coburg via Grantham Street, Dawson Street and Melville Road. The first section, which terminated at Albion Street, Brunswick West, opened by October 1925 and the line was extended to the terminus at Bell Street by 1927.

The area was only sparsely developed in 1927. At that time Carrington Street contained about seven houses of which five were on the east side. Of the two on the west side one, named ‘Avoca’, appears to date from the early twentieth century (this is house at no.17). The houses on the east appear to have been constructed in the early 1920s (SM). By 1930 the number of houses in Carrington Street had increased to 24 and there were six houses in Woodlands Avenue. However, development remained sparse in the other streets: Graham Street contained nine houses, and there were two in Walbilla Street, one of which was ‘Lyndhurst House’, a pre-fabricated two-storey timber house constructed in the 1850s, and relocated to the present site between 1866 and 1870 (RNE). There were two houses each in Grandview Gve (now Ward Gve) and Salisbury Gve (now Grundy Gve), whilst all lots in Gladstone Gve (now Prendergast St), Disraeli Gve and Louisville Avenue remained vacant (MMBW, SM).

The economic depression of the early 1930s brought a halt to development. However, once building recommenced by the mid-1930s it proceeded rapidly and by the early 1940s much of the area was almost fully developed. The exceptions included the western side of Louisville Avenue and the western ends of Woodlands Avenue and Ward Grove, which were eventually built upon during the immediate post-War period (SM).

Three important factors affected the pattern of settlement: the proximity of the Moreland Railway Station, the cable tram in Sydney Road and the provision of sewerage. After World War Two, development extended west to Coonans Road, including the area along the cliff top in Moreland Road. The western boundary of Coonans Hill was altered by the construction of the Tullamarine Freeway in the late 1960s. Also constructed at this time was the combined church and school, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, which opened in 1961.

Sources

(2) Broome, Richard, Coburg. Between Two Creeks, 1987 p.44.
(4) Burchell, Laurie (2 June 1995), Telephone interview
Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plans nos. 2810 (dated 1927), 2817 (1930), 2818 (1927)
Register of the National Estate (RNE) Database. No. 009129.
Sands & McDougall Directory (SM)
(5) State Library of Victoria (SLV), ‘Plan showing sub-division of the Moreland Estate. The Property of the late Doctor Farquhar McCrae. Executor’s Auction’, 1858. Vale and Houghton Map Collection
(8) Broome, p.127.
(8) Broome, p.64. Broome states that their Reynard Road farm was 120 acres.
Description

Address: The Coonan’s Hill precinct comprises the following properties:
- 1-47, 2-58 Carrington Street
- 1-43, 2-52 Disraeli Grove
- 1-45, 2-44 Graham Street
- 1-51, 2-46 Grundy Grove
- 1-41, 2A-24 Louisville Avenue
- 9-55 Melville Road
- 1-53, 2-60 Prendergast Street
- 2-48 Walhalla Street
- 1-59 & 2-74 Ward Grove
- 1, 1A, 1B, 3-99 Woodlands Avenue

The Coonan’s Hill Precinct is a residential area comprising predominantly inter-War detached single-storey houses. Streets run east-west and north-south, with the exception of Louisville Avenue which is diagonally oriented. Situated on high ground relative to the rest of the municipality, the topography of Coonan’s Hill is a dominating characteristic, creating views into and out of the area.

The houses are a mix of weatherboard and brick construction, usually red, clinker or cream brick, in a variety of inter-War and post-War styles including bungalow and English Domestic Revival and Moderne style, most with hipped and gabled terracotta tiled roofs.

They are generally modest in scale, and many of the weatherboard houses have brick or rendered brick entrance porches. Some of these are identical in design, e.g. Nos. 49, 41 and 53 Prendergast Street. A number of semi-detached houses can be found on the south side of Prendergast Street.

The ‘Blackburn House’ at 16 Louisville Avenue, a large attic English Domestic Revival style residence of clinker brick construction, is atypical in the Precinct, as is the two-storey Modernist style house at 20 Louisville Avenue.

Garages are mostly located to the rear of the properties, with some occurring at the front to the side. Front gardens are usually exotic, and modest in scale, and many of the original low brick and woven wire front fences survive. The street trees are typically mixed deciduous and natives of no special distinction, generally post-dating the construction of the houses. Common varieties include Prunus and Melaleuca, which provide little canopy cover.

Surviving 19th century houses include ‘Lyndhurst Hall’, a pre-fabricated two-storey timber house constructed in the 1850s, and relocated to 46 Walhalla Street between 1866 and 1870 (10) and ‘Avoca’, a double-fronted timber house with a bullnose corrugated iron verandah constructed c.1900, remains at 17 Carrington Street.

The following buildings have individual citations datasheets in the Moreland Heritage Review: Building Citations (1998):
- Blackburn House, 16 Louisville Avenue (1936)
- Lyndhurst Hall, 46 Walhalla Street (1850s, relocated between 1866 and 1870)

(10) Register of the National Estate Database. No. 009129.

Statement of significance

What is significant?

The Coonan’s Hill Precinct, comprising houses at 1-47 & 2-58 Carrington Street, 1-43 & 2-52 Disraeli Grove, 1-45 & 2-44 Graham Street, 1-51 & 2-46 Grundy Grove, 1-41 & 2A-24 Louisville Avenue, 9-55 Melville Road, 1-53 & 2-60 Prendergast Street, 2-48 Walhalla Street, 1-59 & 2-74 Ward Grove, and 1, 1A, 1B, 3-99 Woodlands Avenue, comprises 19th and 20th century houses that form a cohesive streetscape. The variety of architectural styles and construction methods reflects the changing tastes and social conditions of the time. The precinct is a valuable example of a residential area that has undergone minimal development, retaining its historic character and providing insight into the history of the area.
1B & 3-99 Woodlands Avenue is significant. Buildings and features that contribute to the significance of the precinct are the houses, associated outbuildings, garages and front fences dating from the inter-War and immediate post-war eras (c.1920 to c.1955).

The following buildings are of local significance and have individual citations:

- Blackburn House, 16 Louisville Avenue
- Lyndhurst Hall, 46 Walhalla Street

Non-Contributory properties include:

- Carrington Street: 3, 14, 21, 21A, 25A, 38, 39 and 41 & 47.
- Disraeli Grove: 24, 48 & 50.
- Graham Street: 13, 17, 33 & 44.
- Louisville Avenue: 2A, 29 & 29A.
- Melville Road: 15, 43, and 55-57.
- Prendergast Street: 6, 8, 13, 20, 21, 23 & 39.
- Walhalla Street: 34, and 40 & 48
- Ward Grove: 3, 8, 11, 21, 23, 24, 26 & 49.
- Woodlands Avenue: 1, 15, 23, 37, 39, 59, 85, 87 & 95

How is it significant?
The Coonan’s Hill Precinct is of local historical and social aesthetic significance to the City of Moreland.

Why is it significant?
The Coonan’s Hill Precinct is of local historical significance for its association with the first colonial settlers and early farming in Coburg. (Criterion A)

The Coonan’s Hill Precinct is of local historical significance as an area of substantially intact modest Inter-War and post-War housing constructed on late-19th century subdivisions, which represents the suburban expansion that occurred in Coburg following World War One. (Criterion A & D)

The Coonan’s Hill Precinct is of local social aesthetic significance as an area, which is commonly identified as a distinct precinct within Pascoe Vale South. Features which contribute to this identification include high levels of integrity of historical interwar and postwar housing, consistency in scale and setbacks and a hilly topography, all of which create cohesive and homogeneous streetscapes. (Criterion E)

Non-Contributory properties include:

- Carrington Street: 3, 14, 21, 21A, 25A, 38, 39 and 41.
- Disraeli Grove: 24, 48 and 50.
- Graham Street: 13, 17, 33 and 44.
- Grundy Grove: 7, 7A, 14, 15 and 16.
- Louisville Avenue: 2A, 29 and 29A.
- Melville Road: 15, 43, and 55-57.
- Prendergast Street: 6, 8, 13, 20, 21, 23 and 39.
- Walhalla Street: 34, and 40.
- Ward Grove: 3, 8, 11, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 49.
- Woodlands Avenue: 37, 39, 59, 85, 87 and 95.