Building suburbs

In the 1950s concern over the reduction of population in the inner suburbs, as people moved out to the new suburbs on Melbourne's fringes, provided new impetus for slum clearance – urban renewal as it became known – in the inner areas of Melbourne. The Commission identified several areas in Prahran as in need of renewal, and Council gave its support to the program. One Prahran Councillor was Horace Petty, who was also the Member for Toorak in the Legislative Assembly, and served as Minister for Housing from 1955 to 1961. Petty supported the Commission's plans to build high rise apartment blocks as a way of renewing Melbourne's inner suburbs, including Prahran. Despite protests from residents, the first of Prahran's Housing Commission flats were completed in Essex Street in 1960. The largest of the Commission's development in Prahran is the Horace Petty Estate, which consists of three twelve-storey blocks and several four-storey blocks, completed in 1967 (Wilde, 1993:75–79). The construction of the Commission estates resulted in the loss of many nineteenth-century workers' cottages in Prahran and Windsor.

c *Horace Petty Estate under construction, 1965.*
[SLHC Reg. No. 6067]

8.6 Developing higher density living

Although the Housing Commission's high-rise blocks were aimed at retaining the level of high density living already established in Prahran, there was another quite different move to higher density living in the study area, and it began much earlier. This trend began with the conversion of some of the large boom-era mansions to shared accommodation such as boarding houses and flats, and continued with the subdivision of large estates to allow the construction of purpose-built apartment developments that were (initially at least) architect-designed in the most up-to-date styles.

8.6.1 Sharing houses

In 1920 the City of Prahran had 536 registered boarding houses (Wilde, 1993:55). At one end of the market was the exclusive guest house, such as *Illawarra*, a boom-time mansion made redundant as a family home when the boom collapsed. *Illawarra* was leased to Mrs Wynne who provided long-term lodgings for five families, each with their own suite. James Paxton, who lived there with his parents from 1909 to 1914, has given a description of life at *Illawarra*. Guests had their meals in a large dining room, with a separate table for each family, and were served by a butler and three parlourmaids. People dressed for dinner. There was a staff of nine, including two gardeners (Paxton, 1983:19–20). Such guest houses enabled the Paxtons, and other families like them, to maintain their accustomed lifestyle, when for some reason they could not maintain their own establishment.

The guest house, and the slightly more humble boarding house, also provided homes for single people in a time when few people lived alone. Men, in particular, were not expected to cook or perform domestic chores for themselves. In the 1920s Betty Malone's widowed mother ran a boarding house in Armadale, where guests included single men and men who were raising children as sole parents (Wilde, 1993:57–58). However many women brought up in wealthy families were unable or unwilling to do their own housekeeping, and lived in guest houses (personal comment from this author's mother, who worked in a guest house in East St Kilda in the early 1940s). Many mansions and large houses in the study area saw service as guest houses or boarding houses including *Redcourt* at 506 Orrong Road (Malone, 2005:22).

For women who needed to support themselves, running a guest house was a respectable way to earn a living, and convenient if they had children at home. While guest houses and boarding houses were run on a business footing, many people rented out spare rooms, or shared houses with other families, as way of covering costs in times of economic hardship. Win Vears, who grew up in Armadale in the 1930s, remembered that many of the large houses in her neighbourhood were used as rooming houses, or were shared by more than one family as a way of making ends meet during hard times. Armadale then had a reputation as a poor area. Most of the houses have since reverted to single-family dwellings (Wilde, 1993:55–56; Vears, recorded interview 5 July 2000, MECWA).

ci Cullen family cottage Denham Place, c.1882.
[SLHC Reg. No. 5023]

Building suburbs

8.6.2 Developing apartment living

The first apartment buildings or flats began to be constructed in Melbourne in the first decades of the twentieth century. In many municipalities, restrictive building codes were enacted to control or stop this new form of development, ostensibly for safety reasons (though there may have also been social overtones, as we shall see below). The municipalities of Prahran and St Kilda were two that allowed and, to a certain extent, encouraged flat development to occur. Financial considerations were also an imperative. Wilde (1999:62) cites an article from the 18 October 1919 edition of the *Prahran Telegraph*:

It was held to be no longer necessary to labour with a house and all the domestic drudgery that entailed when by borrowing Continental ideas, people who could afford it could live in flats… Land has become so valuable the villa of the Victorian days, in a crowded thoroughfare, no longer shows anything like an adequate return of interest on the land's present capital value. It is more profitable to pull the house erected thereon down, and to erect flats.

One of the first purpose-built flats in the study area (and indeed the whole of Melbourne) was Fawkner Mansions, built on the corner of Punt and Commercial roads in Prahran for George Fairbairn (Jnr) in 1912. There seems to have been some cynicism regarding the venture, because the flats were nicknamed 'Fairbairn's Folly', but the apartments were occupied by professional and semi-professional families. It later became a nurses' home for the Alfred Hospital (*Prahran Conservation Study*, p.8; Malone, 1999:19).

However, widespread development of purpose-built flats did not really begin until the 1920s when the last of the remaining big estates in South Yarra and Toorak began to succumb to what Wilde (1999:40) describes as 'the combined pressures of probate, depression and profit'. Among the first were those built by architect/property developer Howard R. Lawson on part of the old *Avoca* estate bounded by Punt and Domain roads, Alexandra Avenue and the South Yarra railway bridge. In 1922 Lawson began designing Californian Bungalow-style maisonettes capable of conversion to flats, some of which remain in the area. After the Depression Lawson began building multi-storey blocks, including *Beverley Hills*, which was set in landscaped gardens with a swimming pool. By 1935 Lawson had built 175 flats in his subdivision, and local residents were beginning to object to further development. Lawson subsequently limited his blocks to three storeys. According to Tibbits (1983:37–38), Lawson's subdivision is a unique precinct of apartment blocks integrated with well-landscaped sites.

Apart from changing the physical character of the suburbs, the flats also changed the social mix by encouraging more single people to live within the area. Until the development of flats, the accommodation choices for single people were very limited, and the new form of accommodation provided additional freedom, particularly for unmarried women. This even led to rumblings of concern among some social commentators that flats would undermine the family and lead to the downfall of society.

However, not all flats were designed with single people in mind. Flats also became fashionable for the wealthy in Toorak and South Yarra as a way of living in a prestigious suburb without the bother of a large house and garden or servants, although some flats did include a servant's room, such as *Denby Dale* in Kooyong (*Malvern Heritage Study*, p.168). Flats in Toorak were therefore spacious and designed for families, rather than single people. *Caringal*, at 3 Tahara Road, which was designed in 1948 by John W. Rivett, even had a children's playground on the roof. Its eighteen flats were all let before building was completed (*Prahran Conservation Study*, pp.3, 36–39).

In not all cases did the subdivision of estates lead to loss of the original houses – in some cases the old houses were retained and adapted by architects. One example is *Coronal*, a boom-era mansion in Waverley Road, Malvern, that was built in 1890 for Joseph Fielding Higgins, who lost possession in the 1890s depression. In 1909, it was purchased by Henry Lewes who in 1939 engaged the architects R.M. and H.M. King to convert the house to three apartments plus 'an intriguing bachelor eyrie in the top of the tower'. The conversion was featured in the September 1939 edition of *Australian Home Beautiful* (Malvern Archives).

Building suburbs

The extent of flat development in Toorak and South Yarra during the inter-war period is demonstrated by the population growth in Toorak Ward of Prahran Council; between 1920 and 1940 the population of Prahran municipality increased by 12.5% and over three-quarters of that was in Toorak where the population nearly doubled. By 1934–35 there were 570 flats in Toorak Ward, as many as in South Yarra and Windsor Wards combined. This growth continued until the late 1930s and by the outbreak of World War II there were almost as many flats in Toorak Ward as houses (Wilde, 1999:64–68).

8.6.3 Architect-designed apartments

In response to resident protests about flats destroying the character of Toorak, developers began building apartment blocks and maisonettes designed to emulate mansions. One such building was Arthur Barnes' block of flats on the corner of Glenferrie Road and Monomeath Avenue, built in 1922. In 1933 Joseph Plottel designed four flats and a maisonette on the corner of Toorak Road and Evans Court. Maisonettes were a popular way of making two houses look like one large house. As we have seen, this strategy had been employed by Lawson – the small 1938 subdivision in St George's Court included three maisonettes (Raworth, 1997). Another strategy to counter criticism was to employ a leading architect to design the building – one example was Walter Burley Griffin, whose *Langi* flats were built on the corner of Toorak and Lansell roads in 1926 (Tibbits, 1983:38).

The strong tradition of patronage previously described resulted in similarly innovative approaches to apartment design. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the design of apartments began to demonstrate the influence of European modernism. Frederick Romberg was one of a number of émigré architects, and is recognised for introducing European modernism to Victoria, in particular its application to flat construction. In 1942 he designed *Glenunga Flats*, which 'broke new ground in the manner that compact flat development was arranged' (*Malvern Heritage Study*, p.205).

Another prominent architect exploring apartment design in the study area was Roy Grounds, who was later to form a partnership with Romberg. Grounds designed four blocks of apartments starting with *Clendon* (1939–40) and *Clendon Court* (1940–41) that demonstrated the Australian modern style of architecture and Grounds' exploration of geometric forms. These were followed in 1941 by *Moonbria* in Mathoura Road, and *Quamby* in Glover Court. The latter was designed was designed to take account of a steeply sloping site, the curving street frontage and the fan-shaped allotment (*Prahran Conservation Study*). As we have seen, Grounds was later to design his own residence and four apartments at 24 Hill Street, Toorak. The influence of these buildings can be seen in aforementioned *Caringal* in Tahara Road, Toorak, which at six storeys would have been considered high-rise at the time.

8.6.4 Apartment development in the post-war era

In the 1950s the approach to flat building changed when a pro-development Prahran Council encouraged it on a large scale, and little attention was given to aesthetics in design or the effect on the landscape. The western part of the study area was close to the city and attracted professional and business people. That Toorak or South Yarra was still a prestigious address is reflected in the rents for the time – almost double that for a flat in neighbouring Richmond. During the 1960s residents began to note with alarm the number of old houses in Toorak and South Yarra being replaced by apartment blocks of ever increasing heights. These new flats, together with the Housing Commission developments, restored the population of the City of Prahran to its pre-World War II level by 1971, but the growing trend towards living alone meant that further high density housing stock was needed to increase population levels in inner suburbs (Wilde, 1993:80–83).

ciii Robert Hamilton's Denby Dale in 1938.
[SLHC Reg. No. 5005]

civ (top) Walter Burley Griffin's Langi apartments, Toorak Road, Toorak.
[SLHC Reg. No. 13257]

cv San Jose, at corner of Wattletree Road and Burke Road, Malvern.
[SLHC Reg. No. 9536]

Building suburbs

Until 1969, there were few planning controls regulating the construction of apartments – so long as the plans complied with the Uniform Building Regulations that regulated the area of the building in relation to the size of the block, the development could proceed. Wilde (1999:81–82) notes that by 1960 councillors had resigned themselves to pointing out that they had no power over development proposals, providing they were in accordance with the UBR's. Both Prahran and Malvern Councils passed by-laws in the post-war period attempting to limit flat development (as early as 1938 Malvern Council restricted flats to two storeys, with no more than four on one allotment), but to little avail as State Government policy at the time was generally in favour of higher density development (Wilde, 1993:66; Foster, 1999:75–5). The consequence was a number of high-rise apartment developments up to ten stories in height, in Toorak and South Yarra particularly along Toorak Road.

In 1969 local government authorities were finally given powers to develop their own town planning controls, and Prahran Council was one of the first to do so. Council commissioned a firm of town planners – Perrott, Lyon, Timlock and Kesa – to prepare a Residential Zoning Plan and Code. The resulting 'Perrott Plan' as it became known, set out height limits for various parts of the City of Prahran, with recommendations that flats in the high parts of Toorak and South Yarra be limited to 20 storeys. The plan prompted a huge public outcry, which will be explored in Chapter 10. The outcome was the restriction of flats to three storeys (See Wilde, 1993:88–95).

In the early 1980s, in response to further pressure for development and the Metropolitan Strategy produced by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, Prahran Council set maximum building heights as six storeys away from main roads. At the same time Singapore businessman Jack Chia proposed to redevelop the entire stretch of Chapel Street from Toorak Road to the river, including the old brickworks and Electrolux sites, with a huge luxury residential, hotel and commercial development, reaching to eighteen stories. After lengthy negotiations with Council, the State Government stepped in and gave approval for the scheme. By this time Jack Chia had withdrawn from the project because of financial difficulties. Eventually a modified version of the original plan, now known as Como Centre, was built (Wilde, 1993:114–19; Malone, 2000:8–9).

8.7 Creating public landscapes

Hoddle's plan of subdivision for the western part of the study area (the entire City of Prahran and the north-western part of the City of Malvern) did not provide for any reserves for public use or open space. A few reserves were provided in the later plan for the Gardiner section on the eastern side, including the Town Hall and Court House reserve and two water reserves – one around a spring near the corner of what is now High Street and Spring Road, and the other at a water hole on Gardiners Creek at the end of High Street. Neither the early settlers nor their local councils had much interest in creating public landscapes before the 1880s.

Consequently, the parks and pleasant open spaces that are now a feature of the study area were acquired gradually by the two municipalities. The sites were generally areas of land that were not suitable for commercial or residential development. Parks were initially proposed in the interests of public health, but beautifully landscaped public gardens soon became a source of municipal pride. Local pride was particularly evident in the Malvern municipality, which sometimes styled itself 'the Garden City'. In the late twentieth century local residents took up the cause for the natural environment, and this is reflected in the most recent parks.

8.7.1 Creating leafy suburbs

The study area's reputation as one of Melbourne's pleasant leafy suburbs must be attributed, initially, to the creation of private gardens on the large estates of the wealthy. People living in their own private park had little need of a public park. Even after most of the large Toorak estates were broken up by developers, the suburb retained its rural character. A 1932 article in *Australian Home Beautiful* eulogised the 'wide and winding roads, verdant with the foliage of ancient trees and virgin bush … (of) Melbourne's most fashionable suburb'. The writer remarked that Toorak was the place where the 'venerable gum' was not removed to make way for a fence; rather the usual practice was to build the fence around the tree (cited in *Malvern Heritage Study*, p.297). Exotic as well as indigenous trees have remained from the old estates, to become part of the modern landscape. McDougall (1985:35) noted an old oak from the Orrong Estate that still stood in St John's Church grounds in 1985. Council street tree planting programs have enhanced the overall appearance of Toorak and many other parts of the study area.

An early suggestion that trees would beautify the street environment was made in 1877 by Prahran Councillor William Bowen. This idea was shared by some Prahran property owners who offered to pay half the cost of the trees in their street. However, Council would initially only consider planting trees along Dandenong Road, to match those already planted on the St Kilda side. It is uncertain when the trees were actually planted, but a photograph (see photograph cvi) dating from c.1900 shows a row of fairly young trees on the south (St Kilda) side of the road. Another view in Malvern (reproduced in Cooper, 1935) dating from c.1900 shows semi-mature pine trees. According to Cooper, the councils of Prahran, Malvern, St Kilda and Caulfield co-operated to develop Dandenong Road as a pleasant tree-lined boulevard.

cvi (below) Two views of Dandenong Road showing the development of landscaping. Below is a c.1900 view looking east toward Wattletree Road showing trees on the south side planted by St Kilda Council. The c.1920 view to the left shows the landscaping carried out after the construction of the tramway in 1911. [SLHC Reg. No. 211 and 1372]

After their initial reluctance, Prahran Council began planting and maintaining street trees throughout the municipality, particularly Toorak, and by 1923 had planted 6000 trees. In 1932, the Council decided to commence 'a liberal scheme of tree planting in the residential streets with the object of beautifying and enhancing the appearance of those parts of the City, which lend themselves to treatment of this kind' (Wilde, 1999:26). The principal trees were oriental planes and golden poplars. Despite the privations caused by the Depression, council, with the assistance of unemployed labour, continued to plant upwards of 600 trees a year during the 1930s. Alexandra Avenue was designed as a fine boulevard connecting Prahran with Melbourne. When the trees were planted along the section from Punt Road to the railway bridge, the rock was blasted to allow room for roots and drainage of the trees. On the river side of the avenue, four rows of poplars, willows and eucalypts were planted (Cooper, 1924:297–300). By the end of the 1930s Prahran had taken on 'a leafy and shady appearance' and so many trees had been planted that Council 'no longer bothered to keep count'. However, the spread of trees was not uniform across the municipality. Wilde (1999:33) notes that:

The oldest and biggest species were mainly in the streets of the east. .. The narrower streets of Windsor and Prahran seldom provided sufficient room for the splendour of a mature oak or plane. The result was a pattern of street trees, which served to emphasise the social and economic diversity of the city.

Building suburbs

According to Cooper (1935:167), the Malvern Council 'always had a sense of the picturesque'. In 1881 Council offered residents tree-guards to encourage them to plant trees along the roads in front of their properties, and also undertook to provide the trees – oaks, elms, aspens and poplars – and labour for their planting. Council established its own nursery for propagating trees and plants for Malvern's streets and parks. Thomas A. Pockett OBE, Curator of Parks and Gardens in the Malvern municipality from 1888 to 1918, is credited with planting 'many miles of street trees' (Malvern Archives). By the late 1920s, 118 miles of Malvern's streets had been planted with trees. Malvern Council claimed to be the first in Victoria to plant jacarandas, which became popular street trees in other suburbs besides Malvern.

Some species were found to be a nuisance, particularly the plane and golden poplar, which broke up pavements, and some of these trees were replaced with other species. Malone mentions the liquidambars that were planted in Dunraven Avenue soon after its formation in 1922 (Strahan, 1989:48–9, Malone, 2004:39).

8.7.2 Public health and municipal pride

The early establishment of Toorak as a fashionable suburb, where land was an expensive commodity, helps to explain the fact that little land in that part of the study area has been acquired for public open space. Toorak's only public parks are Brookville Gardens, adjacent to the Toorak Primary School, and the tiny W.M. Dane Park, on a slope adjacent to Heyington Station (see Chapter 9). Brookville Gardens were developed on low-lying land on the Hawksburn Creek, which was acquired by Prahran Council in 1906 (Malone, 2002:53).

Prahran Council concentrated its early program of parks and gardens in the more populous Prahran and Windsor areas, where it was believed residents needed open space for fresh air and recreation. In the 1880s Prahran Council floated a loan to purchase land for public parks. This met with considerable opposition from ratepayers, who thought that public health would be better served if their rates were spent on well-kept streets and clean back lanes. Nevertheless, Council proceeded, in secret, to buy three properties – the Orrong Potteries at Armadale, a block at Grattan Street, Prahran, and a block in High Street owned by an absentee landlord and used for grazing cows. In August 1885 the three sites, known respectively as Toorak Park, Prahran Reserve (now Grattan Gardens) and Victoria Gardens, were declared open 'to public use as pleasure grounds and places of recreation' by Lady Loch, wife of the Governor (Cooper, 1924:287–94).

cvii *Floral display in Grattan Gardens, 1914.*
[SLHC Reg. No. 7003]

The Victoria Gardens were designed in the traditional English style by Como's former gardener, William Sangster, who was making a name for himself as one of Melbourne's leading landscape designers. Mayor George Taylor bestowed his wife's name on the Gardens, and presented the gates and a statue of the Winged Victory. The Victoria Gardens became a focal point for family and community celebrations, school picnics and fundraising concerts. A group called Friends of the Victoria Gardens renovated the gardens before World War I and added a glasshouse, lily pond and fountain. In the 1930s the gardens were redesigned by Edna Walling. The gardens became run-down after World War II, and it was not until 1989 that restoration works, again by the Friends group, began (Malone, 2001:20–3; Wilde, 1993:35).

Building suburbs

Princes Gardens were established on the site of the Furneaux and Goodbody sawmill and timber yard, purchased by the Prahran Council in 1906 as a playing space for the children of poorer families. It was low lying and probably flood prone. Initially it was called the Malvern Road Gardens but the name was changed in 1921, after a visit by the Prince of Wales. In 1923 the park was doubled in size with the addition of land purchased along the west side of Essex Street, and a donation of land in Walker Street by Dafydd Lewis. In 1924 a wading pool and children's playground were constructed, and the gates were brought from the mansion *Illawarra* and installed at the entrance. Later the Prahran swimming pool replaced the wading pool and skateboard ramps were added to the play area (Malone, 2001:13–14; Wilde, 1993:16–17).

In Malvern early public support for gardens seemed stronger than it was in Prahran, which may be attributed to the influence of curator Pockett. After residents protested against the intended sale of the water reserve in High Street, Council acquired the site for pleasure gardens. Malvern Public Gardens, opened in 1890, were laid out by Pockett, who was renowned for his chrysanthemums. The spring was transformed into a pond with a grotto and fountain (Strahan, 1989:39–40).

In 1906 Council purchased eighteen acres on the corner of Burke and Wattletree roads, Malvern East, for a new park. This area was still largely rural and fences had to be built to keep out straying livestock. Suburban development had commenced with the building of houses on the nearby *Gascoigne Estate*, and was to increase with the opening, in 1910, of the new electric tramline. Central Park was conveniently situated at the Wattletree Road tram terminus. Once again the gardens were laid out by Pockett, and Council built a Tudor style kiosk in 1911, followed by a bandstand in 1916. The bandstand was a venue for concerts, including performances by the Malvern Tramways Band, formed 1911 (Nigro and Foster, 1994). The band predates the formation of the well-known Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Band, which had strong associations with Wattle Park in Box Hill.

During the 1920s Malvern Council purchased a number of other sites throughout the municipality and established small parks, sports grounds and children's playgrounds.

cix Thomas Pockett's renowned Chrysanthemums at Malvern Gardens.
[SLHC Reg. No. 1019]

8.7.3 Transforming swamps into parks

In 1921 Prahran Council bought 35 acres of the *Como* estate from the Armytage family. This former lagoon was still swampy and subject to frequent flooding. The original intention was to have a park with native trees and bird sanctuary, but Como Park was eventually developed for sports activities. The use of native trees was unusual for its time and it was originally called 'The Australian Park' (Hubbard 1992:28). In the 1930s the land was regraded, with some of the soil being used to build up Alexandra Avenue, which (as discussed in Chapters 2 and 4) was being made at the time. The new Como Park was opened by the Governor, Lord Huntingfield, on 24 October 1934 in the presence of 7000 people. Como Park became a popular picnic and sporting venue (Fox, 1996; Malone, 2000:1–2; Wilde, 1993:16, 28). At about the same time, Rockley Gardens were created from what had been a swamp at the bottom of Rockley Road (Hubbard 1992:28).

The site of Hedgeley Dene Gardens was acquired by Malvern Council for drainage purposes when the Hedgeley Dene farm was subdivided for sale in 1911. The land followed a small watercourse and was full of holes. Council used it as a rubbish tip for a number of years before developing it as a park in 1921. Curator F.L Reeves designed a romantic landscape, which included a lake – presumably from an existing waterhole – with an island and rustic bridges, and a mixture of exotic and native trees and shrubs (Cooper, 1935:229–30; Strahan, 1989:42–44).

8.7.4 Transforming Gardiners Creek

The flood plain along the Gardiners Creek was of little use for residential or commercial development. Malvern Council purchased parcels of land over the years from 1904 to 1934 under the *Gardiner Valley Improvement Scheme*, envisaging a charming boulevard stretching from the Yarra River to Scotchman's Creek at Oakleigh. The vision was never fully realised, but a number of areas were developed by Council as sports grounds, beginning with the Malvern Municipal Golf Links, which as we have seen led to major changes to the course of the creek.

The creek, having been cleared of vegetation, was subject to increased flooding and erosion, and various attempts at flood alleviation were made by draining swamps, re-aligning the creek and stabilising the banks. Exotic plantings of oaks, elms and willows created the character of an English park.

The threat to these parklands in the 1970s and '80s by the (Monash) Freeway, then known as the Arterial Road Link, provoked considerable public protest. A number of pressure groups were formed, the most vocal being the Gardiners Creek Valley Association. This was the era of increased awareness of conservation issues among Australians, as the bush and its natural flora and fauna were under threat from development or commercial exploitation in so many parts of the country. The natural environment of Gardiners Creek Valley had long been lost, but attempts were made to recreate the environment of pre-European settlement with indigenous plantings and re-forming of the creek banks. However, existing exotic trees remaining from the gardens of neighbouring houses demolished for the freeway were retained (Cooper, 1935:168–70; Strahan, 1989:6–11).

In an attempt to compensate for the loss of open space caused by the construction of the freeway, the State Government made part of the old Outer Circle reserve available for a park, and 'Victoria's first urban recreational forest' was re-planted with local indigenous vegetation (Strahan, 1989:255). This is discussed in Chapter 9.

Building suburbs

cx *The Tea Kiosk at Central Park, c.1918.*
[SLHC Reg. No. 53]

cxi *(top) Men's Open at the Malvern Municipal Golf Links, 1956.* [SLHC Reg. No. 5345]

cxii *The lake at Hedgely Dene Gardens.*
[SLHC Reg. No. 275]

cxiii *Opening of the new playing field at Como Park in 1934.*
[SLHC Reg. No. 10299]

HERITAGE

The theme of *Building Suburbs* is illustrated by a variety of places that have important heritage values. These values are sometimes expressed in tangible ways, such as by surviving physical fabric (buildings, structures, trees, landscapes etc.), but are also apparent in the associations and meanings embodied by the place for different communities. This chapter provides a summary of values associated with these places and provides a representative list. For further examples, reference should be made to the heritage studies and reports listed in the bibliography.

Creating Australia's most prestigious suburbs and Living in and around Australian houses

The places associated with these themes provide important evidence of how wealthy people of means lived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is illustrated not only by the size and opulent design of the houses, but also in details such as servants' quarters, stables, outbuildings and the gardens and grounds, which were all intended as an expression of wealth and status.

The places associated with these themes provide vivid evidence of the dramatic phases of 'boom and bust' associated with land speculation in Melbourne. This is illustrated in various ways from the Victorian mansions set within reduced allotments surrounded by later subdivision, to the estates laid out in the nineteenth century that were not fully developed until well into the twentieth century.

Examples of heritage places associated with these themes include:

» *Como*, 16 Como Avenue, South Yarra

» *Stokell*, 49–51 Adelaide Street, Armadale

» *Beaulieu* (now part of St Catherine's School), Heyington Place, Toorak

» *Glyn*, 224 Kooyong Road, Malvern

» *Merriwee Crescent*, as former carriage drive for *Moonga*

» House, 11 Russell Street, Toorak. (an example of an inter-war villa with a maid's room).

Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal

The study area is notable within metropolitan Melbourne and contains many examples of houses and residential neighbourhoods that illustrate what made Melbourne 'marvellous' during the nineteenth century, as well some of the finest expressions of the ideal of Edwardian and inter-war garden suburbs in Australia. These suburbs represent the aspirations of the residents and the municipalities of which they formed a part.

Examples of heritage places associated with this theme include:

» Hawksburn and Williams roads, South Yarra, illustrates different forms of housing on low and high ground

» Grandview Grove, Prahran, a middle class Victorian enclave

» Gascoigne and Waverley Estates, Malvern East, middle class Federation era estates

» Malvern Meadows Estate, Malvern East, a post-war suburban estate.

cxiv Entrance to an inter-war garden, Macquarie Road, Toorak, 1922.
[La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria. Accession number: unknown] [SLHC Reg. No. 808]

Building suburbs

Creating Australia's most 'designed' suburbs

The study area contains a rich and comprehensive legacy of almost every type of urban residential buildings that illustrate the changing styles in domestic architecture in Australia from first settlement until the present day. The study area is notable for both houses of individual or innovative aesthetic or design merit, as well as precincts with important historic character.

The study area provides evidence of the strong culture of patronage that developed in the study area between architect and garden designers and their often wealthy clients, which encouraged design ideas to be explored and challenged. This patronage, which has few parallels in Victoria and even Australia, has resulted in the study area containing many examples of housing that are notable, innovative, or simply unusual examples of their style and type.

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Examples of heritage places associated with this theme include:

» *Little Milton* (house and garden) 26 Albany Road, Toorak

» *Greenwich House* (now Chinese Consulate), Irving Road, Toorak

» *Cranlana* (house and garden), 62 Clendon Road, Toorak

» *Katanga*, 372 Glenferrie Road, Malvern

» *Denby Dale* apartments, 424 Glenferrie Road, Malvern (Additional examples of architect-designed apartments are listed, page 158)

» House, 16 Glyndebourne Avenue, Toorak

» Richardson House, 10 Blackfriars Close, Toorak

» House, 19 Alleyne Avenue, Armadale

» St George's Court streetscape

» Architect's houses include Walter Butler's house, *Duncraig*, 31 Hampden Road, Armadale, 6 Glyndebourne Avenue, Toorak (Marcus Martin), and 24 Hill Street, Toorak (Roy Grounds).

Housing the workers

The study area provides evidence of the strong connection between social status and geography in society creating a pattern of larger and more prestigious housing on higher ground contrasted with the smaller working-class housing on the low ground, a pattern that can be interpreted even today.

Examples of heritage places associated with this theme include:

» Many areas of workers' cottages were demolished by the Housing Commission of Victoria in the 1960s. Intact groups survive in Tyrone Street, Prahran, Palermo Street, and Surrey Road North, South Yarra, McIwrick Street and Frederick Street, Windsor

» HCV Horace Petty Estate

» Cambridge Street, Armadale.

cxv (right) Afternoon tea at Stokell.
[SLHC Reg. No. 8365]

Building suburbs

Developing higher density living

The study area illustrates the development of higher density living in Melbourne. It is of particular interest for providing historic evidence of how apartment living was developed initially for middle and upper income people as an alternative to having a large house or mansion, before coming a more widely used form of accommodation in the post-war era.

Examples of heritage places associated with this theme include:

» *Illawarra*, 1 Illawarra Court, Toorak, and *Redcourt*, 506 Orrong Road, Armadale, which are examples of large mansions converted to shared accommodation and later, as apartments

» Fawkner Mansions, corner of Punt and Commercial roads, Prahran

» Howard Lawson apartment precinct, South Yarra – *Beverley Hills*, *Stratton Heights*, etc, which is the most comprehensive and intact groups of inter-war apartments in Melbourne

» Architect-designed apartments include *Langi* (corner of Toorak and Lansell roads, Toorak), Roy Grounds' trio of apartments *Clendon, Quamby* and *Moonbria, Caringal* (3 Tahara Road, Toorak) and *Tsoshaan*, 777 Malvern Road, Toorak

» Other examples include *San Jose*, cnr. Wattletree Road and Burke Road, Glen Iris.

Creating public landscapes

This illustrates the efforts made by the Prahran and Malvern municipalities to provide adequate open space and how this was often linked to broader concerns about public health, flooding or simply municipal pride. That the Prahran City was able to carry on tree planting during the depression provides an indication of the importance of the measure during that time.

Examples of heritage places associated with this theme include:

» Orrong Road

» Dandenong Road and Alexandra Avenue

» Central Park

» Como Park

» Hedgeley Dene Gardens

» Malvern Public Gardens

» Victoria Gardens.

U1

U1

9 | EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Education is a strong theme in the study area and this chapter identifies and describes the development of church, national and common schools; ragged schools; private venture schools; state schools; modern private school system; Catholic schools and state secondary education (high schools and technical schools). The study area, not surprisingly, is notable for the high number of private schools that have been established within its boundaries. As we shall see, large boom-era mansions that could no longer be maintained by their owners provided ready-made premises for many private schools. The chapter concludes with a section on the development of higher education, and notes how the large number of private schools accounts for the lack of secondary schools in the study area for much of its history.

This chapter incorporates the following themes:

Australian Heritage Criteria (AHC)
Educating

HISTORY

9.1 Early schools

Before the establishment of the state school system in 1872, education was provided by local community groups, particularly churches, who usually gained some government funding towards the building and running of schools. There were also schools known as 'ragged schools', which were set up by charitable groups to provide some elementary education for children of the poorest families. Another major provider of education at the time was the private sector. Many of the early schools in the study area were run by individuals or families as private ventures.

The National Board of Education functioned from 1851 to 1862 managing government-funded non-denominational schools, of which 193 were built throughout Victoria. This was superseded by the *Common Schools Act* 1862. Church or denominational schools sometimes became national or common schools if they obtained government funding. The state eventually took over the responsibility for primary education, and, following the passing of the *Free, Compulsory and Secular Education Act* 1872, began building state schools throughout Victoria. Churches continued to provide education, without government funding, until state aid for religious schools was re-introduced in the second half of the twentieth century.

9.1.1 Early church, national and common schools

One of the earliest common schools in the district was on the west side of Punt Road, South Yarra, just outside the study area, which would have taken children from within the study area. It became the South Yarra Primary School (Chatham, 1985:27). Chatham indicates that there was a Presbyterian Common School near the site of the Toorak Presbyterian Church (now Uniting Church) in Toorak Road in the 1870s (Chatham, 1985:8). A Congregational school was erected at the end of Cecil Place, Prahran, in 1869–70 and remodelled for use as the Protestant Hall in 1879 (*Prahran Conservation Study*).

A common school was opened in 1854 by St Matthew's Church of England in a schoolhouse near the north-west corner of Chapel and High streets. When State School No 1467 (now Hawksburn Primary School) was opened in 1875, the head teacher of St Matthew's School, Walter Gamble, was appointed its principal. Presumably this was the end of St Matthew's School. St Matthew's Church transferred to a new building in High Street in 1876 (Chatham, 1985– see map p.8; Malone, 1999:10).

At Malvern, the Anglicans received a government grant to build a denominational school in Glenferrie Road. The schoolroom also served as an Anglican place of worship until St George's Church was built in 1865 (Cooper, 1935:174).

9.1.2 Ragged schools

The ragged school movement originated in England for the purpose of teaching the poorest children to read the Bible. In Melbourne, ragged schools were concentrated in slum areas, including parts of Prahran and South Yarra, but most disappeared after the state education system commenced. However one ragged school remained in Eastbourne Street, Windsor, until the 1880s, when it was known as the Scripture Reading School. It catered for the very young children as the older ones started at the state school. Eventually the former ragged school became the Hornbrook Free Kindergarten (Malone, 2001:44–45).

cxvi Prahran Common School, c.1875.
[SLHC Reg. No. 7079]

Education

9.1.3 Private venture schools

Many individuals or families established small fee-paying schools as commercial ventures. Running a school was one of few career options for middle-class women, especially single women who needed to support themselves. Chatham has identified 32 private venture schools in South Yarra, Prahran, Windsor and Toorak before 1872, and further out in Malvern many similar schools operated well into the twentieth century. Frederick Revans Chapman, son of a judge (and later a judge himself), who lived in Toorak Road as a boy in the early 1860s, remembered attending a small school run by Mrs Neil in a street behind the Ayer's Arms Hotel, on the north-west corner of Toorak Road and Chapel Street (Cooper, 1924:44–45). Chatham describes Madame Lautour's girls' school, which provided 'a housewifely curriculum based on polite accomplishments'. Madame was an experienced teacher, from France, and ran her school in Hillingdon Place, Prahran, from 1853 to 1900 (Chatham, 1985:7). In the 1880s Daniel and Martha Connelly opened Cornelia College for Ladies in Horsburgh Grove, Armadale, which later moved to Albany Road. The school was taken over by the Misses Rudd in the 1890s and renamed Strathclyde (Foster, 1999:59–50).

Education provided by private venture schools was of variable quality, and some were short-lived (Chatham, 1985:7 and 12–13; Strahan, 1989:105). However, some which acted as preparatory schools for private schools did survive, generally to be taken over by the churches and they are now part of the current private school system. A number of such schools still exist in the study area and will be discussed under private schools.

9.2 Developing a system of state education

The study area's first state school was School No 1467, opened in 1874 as Prahran School. It replaced three common schools, and served one of the most densely populated parts of the municipality at that time. The school was one of a group of schools designed by leading Melbourne architects as a result of a competition held by the newly formed Education Department in 1873, and erected in the period 1874–81, which also included Primary School No. 2855 in High Street. The competition drew a number of important Victorian architects, including Reed and Barnes, Terry and Oakden, Charles Webb, W.H. Ellerker, and Crouch and Wilson, the architects of this particular design. The Gothic style and religious flavour of the bell tower emphasise the seriousness accorded to educational provision after the introduction of compulsory education in 1873. Heritage Victoria comments that:

The competition to produce school designs was an indication of the importance accorded the task of building the state's education system by the newly formed Department of Education. Additionally, the idea of producing attractive but standardised designs reflected the enormous task of building sufficient schools to cope with the massive demand sparked by the introduction of free compulsory education in 1873. Primary School No. 1467 is significant not only as the first state school to be built in Prahran after the introduction of compulsory education, but as a reminder of this broader context of the development of state education as well (VHR H1032, File No. 602040).

By 1900, with an enrolment of almost 2000 students, the school claimed to be the largest in Victoria. The name was changed to Hawksburn in 1906 and a new infant building was added in 1911. The closure of Hawksburn Primary School in the early 1990s and its transformation into Leonard Joel's auction rooms highlights the changing demographics of the study area (Malone, 2000:44–45; Wilde, 1993:203).

cxvii *Spring Road State School, Malvern c.1890.*
[SLHC Reg. No. 2622]

Malvern's first state school originated from the school at St George's Church. Classes were also held in the Court House until 1874, when a new two-roomed school was built on the reserve in Spring Road. The Spring Road School grew rapidly, as new urban settlers populated the district. Several additions were made to the school – in 1889, 1907, 1913 and 1923 (Strahan, 1989:96; Cooper, 1935:180–81).

Later expansion in the east of the study area during the inter-war period brought increasing demands for new schools to ease overcrowding in existing schools. Considerable campaigning by local communities was necessary before the State Government addressed the backlog. Although the site of the Lloyd Street School was purchased in 1920 it did not open until 1923 and was raised to central-school status within three years, a feat that was described as a 'very creditable' achievement by the council (Strahan, 1989:98).

Education

State education came late to Toorak, probably because the district was settled by wealthy families who preferred to continue private education for their children. Toorak State School was opened in 1890. It later became Toorak Central School. Central schools were the State Government's way of compensating for the lack of a state secondary education system. They provided education to the equivalent of years seven and eight classes so that children could be educated up to the age of fourteen in the state system. Students were awarded the Merit Certificate on successful completion of year eight. Spring Road and Lloyd Street Schools were also central schools. Most central schools in Victoria were gradually phased out after the introduction of state secondary schools, but some remained in the study area for a particular purpose. An important role of central schools in the study area was as feeder schools for Melbourne's two prestigious state high schools, which commenced at year nine – Melbourne High for boys (see page 168) and MacRobertson Girls' High in South Melbourne. Toorak remained a central school into the 1980s. The Spring Road School, now known as Malvern Central School, is a rare example of a Year P-8 school in Victoria today (Strahan, 1989:98–99; Chatham 1985:26–27).

9.3 Developing the private school system

The plethora of private venture schools that sprang up in the nineteenth century catered for wealthy families, who preferred to give their children a private education even after the state system commenced (Foster, 1999:59). Even after the establishment of the state secondary system following World War I, the middle-class people of the study area, and indeed other eastern suburbs, continued the tradition of private school education for their children. Janet McCalman has shown that private school education was a crucial factor in defining and maintaining middle-class identity in Melbourne from the 1930s. Although none of the four schools featured in McCalman's *Journeyings: The Biography of a Middle-Class Generation* (1993) are actually located in the study area, her findings highlight the significance of the plethora of private schools and the dearth of state high schools in a large part of the study area throughout its history.

Some time after the Malvern State School vacated the St George's schoolroom, Clara Murray's Malvern Ladies' College occupied the premises. Commenced in 1883, the college moved to Valetta Street, Malvern. Malvern Ladies' College must have been one of the more prestigious schools of the time because it 'attracted vice-regal patronage at its prize-givings'. In 1911 the school merged with Korowa Girls School and moved from Wattletree Road to Kerferd's former house *Ranfurlie* in 1913. Korowa was eventually acquired by the Anglican Church's education system. *Ranfurlie* was used to house boarders until its demolition in 1974. New classrooms designed by Louis Williams were built in 1926 (Strahan, 1989:105–08; Raworth and Foster, 1997:8–9).

Malvern (Boys) Grammar School had similar origins. Commenced by Charles McLean in rented buildings in 1890, the school succeeded in its early years and moved into new buildings in Kerferd Street. It was taken over by the Anglican Church in the early 1920s. The school moved into *Valentines,* the former mansion of J.M. Davies, in 1924. In 1960 it amalgamated with Caulfield Grammar School, to become its Malvern Campus (Cooper, 1935:182–83; Raworth and Foster, 1997:7–8).

Education

Other private schools in the study area, mostly girls' schools, took over mansions that could no longer be maintained by their owners. They were large buildings situated in large grounds in genteel neighbourhoods, close to the homes of their students. A number of them are still in existence – St Catherine's, Sacre Coeur and Loreto Mandeville Hall – although the latter two, being Catholic schools, have different origins (see below). These days the schools take in students from all parts of Melbourne, but perhaps parents in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries preferred their daughters not to travel far to school.

It is interesting that there are few private schools for boys in the study area. This is possibly due to the fact that three of Melbourne's large prestigious 'public schools' – Scotch College, Wesley College and Melbourne Grammar – were just outside the study area's borders and a tram or train ride from the heart of the area. These were the schools to which the professional and business men of Toorak, South Yarra and Malvern sent their sons. Public schools were founded in the 1850s and 1860s by churches, with Government financial support, to prepare students for university and the professions, and for the civil service. Religious adherence to the particular denomination of the school was not necessary, hence the name 'public school' (*Victorian Year Book*, 1973:485). They have become known as private schools in recent years to avoid confusion with state secondary colleges.

There were a few private run and church primary schools in and near the study area. These schools prepared young boys for the public school, without them having to travel far from home. One was at Christ Church, South Yarra (just outside the study area). Another was *Glamorgan* in Toorak, now the primary school campus of Geelong Grammar School. *Glamorgan*, originally a private venture school, is on the former site of Toorak College which was founded in the 1870s by a Presbyterian clergyman for the 'sons of gentlemen', taking over the school in the Toorak Presbyterian Church hall. A new school was built in Douglas Street, but apparently it attracted few sons of gentlemen, because it became a girls' school and moved to Malvern in 1918. The Douglas Street site was taken over by *Glamorgan* in 1887 (Wilde, 1993:233; Chatham, 1985:46).

9.4 Catholic schools

The Roman Catholic school system developed in response to the 1872 *Education Act*, which prohibited religious instruction in state schools. Catholic parishes set up their own primary schools. The first parish schools in the study area were both called St Joseph's. One opened in the parish church at South Yarra in 1888, before the school was built in 1892; the other opened in Malvern in 1889, before the parish was formed (Chatham, 1985:30; Strahan, 1989:106–07).

In addition, religious orders opened single–sex secondary schools – colleges for boys and convent schools for girls. Nuns and brothers – often brought especially from Ireland – founded and staffed Catholic schools. Catholicism in Australia was closely identified with the poor of Irish origin. There were, of course some outstanding exceptions, but generally the influential Irish, such as Arbitration Court Judge Henry Bourne Higgins, were Protestant. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that the Catholic Church made it its mission to provide education as a way of raising the status and influence of Catholics in the Australian community, as well as instructing children in the faith.

In 1873 five Presentation Sisters arrived from Ireland and began teaching girls at St Mary's Church, East St Kilda (just outside the study area). In 1874 they moved to *Turret Lodge*, which had been owned by merchant Thomas Anderson. The school included a boarding school for country girls, and the Sisters accepted girls from poorer families who could not pay the fees. A new convent was built in 1884, and school buildings in 1884. Sacre Coeur opened at Keeley's mansion *Brynmawr* in 1888, and the Loreto Sisters moved their convent school from Albert Park to Joseph Clarke's *Mandeville Hall* in 1924 (Chatham, 1985:33–36; 39; Strahan, 1989:106–07; Raworth and Foster 1997:4–5).

De La Salle College opened for boys in new buildings in Malvern in 1912. The Christian Brothers, founded in Ireland by Edmund Rice to teach working-class boys, opened St Kevin's College in East Melbourne, originally as a senior secondary school. In 1932, the school was transferred to the Toorak mansion *Glenbervie* (demolished) and later to the *Clovelly Estate*, near Heyington Station, where new buildings and playing fields were established (Strahan 1989:106–07; Chatham, 1985:42–43).

Education

9.5 Developing a system of higher education

9.5.1 State high schools

One theory for the lack of secondary schools in the study area for much of its history is that many students of wealthy families attended private schools. Another is the influence of the first state high school, Melbourne High, which quickly established a reputation as one of the premier secondary schools in the state.

At the time of the *Education Act* 1872, primary education was deemed sufficient for working people. Most working-class families could not afford to keep their children at school after they were old enough to work. Technical and trade education was usually acquired on the job by people in skilled and semi-skilled occupations, while secondary and tertiary education remained the privilege of the wealthy.

A new *Education Act* in 1910 allowed the Education Department to provide high school education. A Continuation School in Spring Street, Melbourne had been providing secondary education for boys and girls since 1854, and from 1906 prepared students for university entrance. This school was renamed Melbourne High School in 1912, but it needed a new building and a larger site. Prahran Council campaigned for the new school to be in its municipality, offering a site and a £5000 cash donation. The site on Forrest Hill, overlooking the Yarra River was chosen, and the school was opened in 1927. The Headmaster modelled the new Melbourne High School on the public schools of the day and admitted only boys (Wilde, 1993:224–25). Melbourne High School was to remain the only state high school in the study area until after World War II. During that time, central schools such as at Malvern in Spring Road served as feeder schools.

Once Melbourne High was established, there was a push to provide a similar facility for girls. While Melbourne Girls' High was eventually established outside the study area, a girls' high school was established in Malvern in 1946 on part of the Malvern Primary School No. 2856 site. A freestanding domestic arts centre was built in 1945 as part of the Malvern Girls High School in the form of a single-storey brick house, purpose-built to provide a model domestic interior for teaching purposes. In 1961 a double-storey building was constructed for a library, cookery centre and music room. Malvern Girls' High continued to use the building until the end of 1993 when it reverted to Tooronga Road Primary School. At that time, Malvern Girls' High School merged with the Richmond Girls' High school to form the Melbourne Girls' College.

With the post-war baby boom came higher expectations for education, but people of the study area had to campaign for new state secondary schools to accommodate them. Win Vears remembers the campaign for a high school in Prahran:

… the Member of Parliament at the time said that only two people would go to the high school; they would either go to the technical college – Prahran Tech – or they would go to private schools. Which proved rather false, because at one time I think there were nearly a thousand pupils in the school (recorded interview 5 July 2000, MECWA).

That figure of 1000 enrolments was reached and surpassed within a decade of the school's opening in the mid–1960s. Students included the children of the huge influx of immigrants that moved into Prahran's public housing.

In 1960 Chadstone High School was opened for the children of the new housing estates at the area's south-eastern end. A few other high schools were also built in or near the study area in the 1960s and '70s, including Ardoch High School – a school that adopted an alternative approach to education – in a converted 1920s village of town houses just outside the study area on the south side of Dandenong Road.

Demographic changes and the trend towards private school education in the wider community in recent decades have led to a fall in the number of children enrolling in state secondary schools. In the 1990s many schools across the state were closed or amalgamated including Chadstone, Prahran and Ardoch. Dulcie Wilkie, one of the parents who had worked to establish Chadstone High School, was heart-broken to see it demolished. The site is now Phoenix Park, named in honour of the phoenix on the school's badge (recorded interview 27 July 2000, MECWA). Prahran High was also demolished, the site once again becoming part of Orrong Park.
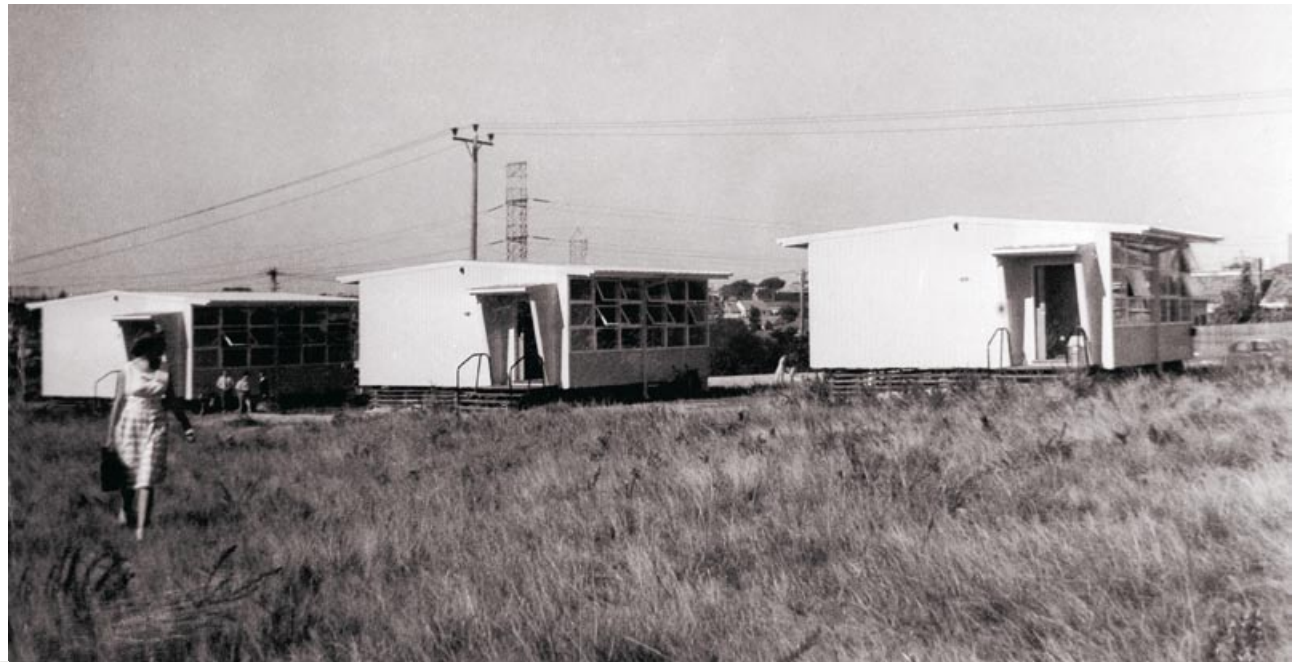
cxx (above and left) Portables at Chadstone High in 1962 and the school during demolition c.1991. [SLHC Reg. No. 5302 and 8013]

Education

9.5.2 Technical schools

A tradition of working-class education had been established through the Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts, which proliferated throughout Victoria, but most of these became little more than libraries and meeting places. Following the findings of the Technological Commission of 1869, Schools of Mines were opened in mining districts, the first being in Ballarat in 1870. Technical schools were established in Melbourne by philanthropists, such as Francis Ormond, successful pastoralist and Toorak resident, who founded the Working Men's College (now RMIT University). George Swinburne established Swinburne Technical College in Hawthorn.

The Prahran Mechanics' institute had a significant role in the development of technical education in the study area, particularly in art and design. The Institute's School of Art and Design was established in 1870, and became a registered Technical Art School in 1909. With the help of the Prahran Council, the institute bought a new site in High Street and opened a new building. The Government began taking responsibility for junior technical education in 1912, and the new building was leased to the Education Department as Prahran Technical School from 1915. This school was the foundation of subsequent junior and senior technical schools for girls and boys in the working-class areas of Prahran and Windsor (Chatham, 1985:62-64; Wilde, 1993:216-18).

9.5.3 Colleges and universities

The Technical School that originated in the Mechanics' Institute building was also part of the evolution of higher technical education a in the study area, following the introduction of TAFE and the expansion of the tertiary sector in the 1970s and 80s. The Prahran College of Technology specialised in art and design, but broadened to a more general curriculum. After a complicated process of re-namings, amalgamations and splits, various functions were taken over by other institutions and universities, and the old college site became the Prahran campus of the Swinburne University of Technology (Wilde, 1993:221–24).

cxxi (right) Prahran Mechanics' Institute and Technical School and (below) in 1927 students at work, c.1916. [SLHC Reg. No. 7482 and 7470]

cxxii (right) Armadale State School, c.1900 [SLHC Reg. No. 9039] and (above) the view today. [SLHC Reg. No. 13333]

TECHNICAL
SCHOOL.

MECHANICS
INSTITUTE.

CIRCULATING
LIBRARY

HERALD

MECHANICS INSTITUTE & TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

Education

At the other end of the study area, *Stonington* has also played a role in the development of Victoria's tertiary education system. After the removal of the Governors, *Stonington* served a variety of uses, including St Margaret's Girls School (which later moved to Berwick) and a Health Department administration centre. From 1957 to 1973 the property was the Toorak Teachers College, which had been founded in *Glenbervie* (11 Glenbervie Road) in 1951. It was one of the new primary teacher training colleges set up to address the teacher shortage during the 'baby boom'. The Toorak Teachers College became the State College of Victoria –Toorak Campus, then the Toorak campus of Victoria College, one of the new Colleges of Advanced Education in 1973. Following the elevation of Victoria College to university status in 1992, *Stonington* became a campus of Deakin University (Heritage Victoria Citation; *A Place in History*, No.34; *Malvern Heritage Study*, p.141).

With such a large private education sector, private teacher training was another important aspect of higher education in the study area. *Mercer House*, in Mercer Road, Armadale, was an Associated Teachers Training Institution established in 1921 to train teachers for private schools. It operated for 60 years and was believed to be the oldest autonomous teachers' college in Victoria (Malvern Archives).

HERITAGE

The theme of *Education* is illustrated by a variety of places that have important heritage values. These values are sometimes expressed in tangible ways, such as by surviving physical fabric (buildings, structures, trees, landscapes etc.), but are also apparent in the associations and meanings embodied by the place for different communities. This chapter provides a summary of values associated with these places and provides a representative list. For further examples, reference should be made to the heritage studies and reports listed in the bibliography.

Examples of heritage places associated with the theme of *Education* include:

Early schools

Examples of early and church schools are extremely rare. Examples include:

- Hornbrook Free Kindergarten, Earl Street, Windsor

- Former Congregational School and Protestant Hall, Cecil Place (end), Prahran.

Developing a system of state schools and developing a system of higher education

The study area is notable within the metropolitan area as it contains a number of school buildings that illustrate the development of state education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century after the passing of the 1872 Education Act and the 1910 Act, which provided for secondary education. The sheer number of schools and their size illustrate the rapid development of certain parts of the study area in the nineteenth century as well as the enormous task facing the Education Department during that time.

The now closed state schools within the study area continue to have strong associations with local communities. As the suburbs grow and change, the school buildings remain as important markers of constancy that remind us of the early communities that created what is the study area today. Even when the buildings have been removed, communities have retained strong associations and memories of the place.

Examples of places associated with this theme include:

- Nineteenth century state schools include Armadale Primary School No. 2634 (Densham Road), and Malvern Central School (Spring Road)

- Schools that have been closed include Hawksburn Primary School No. 1467 (369 Malvern Road) and Prahran Primary School No. 2855 (High Street).

cxxiii *(left) Male students and teachers outside Hawksburn State School, c.1880* [SLHC Reg. No. 7078] *and (above) the view today.* [SLHC Reg. No. 13369]

Education

The theme of education in the study area is also illustrated by places associated with continuing and higher education and training. The study area is notable as it provides evidence of key stages in the evolution of higher education beginning with Mechanics' Institutes, through to Melbourne High and then to universities. The importance of education as a theme within the study area is also represented by the places that were associated with the training of teachers for both the private and state school systems. The former Malvern Girls' High is of particular significance in the history of education for girls.

Example of places associated with this theme

» Prahran Mechanics' Institute and Prahran Campus of Swinburne University

» Melbourne High School and the buildings associated with Malvern Girls High at Primary School No. 2856 (Tooronga Road)

» *Glenbervie* (11 Glenbervie Road, Toorak)

» *Stonington* Campus of Deakin University

» Holmesglen College of TAFE.

Developing a private school system and Catholic schools

The study area provides evidence about the development of the private school system in Victoria. Of particular interest is how the large number of private schools and the correspondingly small number of state schools illustrates the creation, development and establishment of the private school sector in Melbourne. The high number of private schools, and continued adherence to them rather than to the state sector, is significant as it is a key factor in determining the middle-class identity of both Melbourne and the study area. Also of significance is the study area's provision for the training of school teachers specifically for the private sector.

The private schools and other educational establishments are one of the key adaptive re-users of mansions once owned by the area's wealthy residents.

Some examples of private and Catholic schools include:

» Presentation College, Dandenong Road, Windsor

» Loreto Mandeville Hall (Mandeville Crescent, Toorak), Caulfield Grammar (Malvern Campus, Willoby Avenue, Glen Iris) and St Catherine's School (Heyington Place, Toorak) – These schools all incorporate former private mansions into the campuses.

COMMUNITY & CULTURE

INTRODUCTION

A natural consequence of the development of communities with common interests is the need for places to meet, socialise, learn and worship. These places are important markers on the landscape, which express the hopes, dreams and optimism of the first settlers for the future development of their communities. The places also represent important stages of life within communities from early childhood to old age. Consequently, these places have great social value and associations with local residents. They also express some of the unique aspects of the study area, and help explain the diversity of the various communities within it by highlighting differences and shared experiences.

This chapter commences with a description of the way Aboriginal peoples continued their cultural connection with the land after European settlement, and how the new communities established their own cultural networks.

Of particular interest within the study area is a strong tradition of helping others – needy people in the local community and further afield – through a variety of institutions and groups. Historically reflecting the extremes of wealth and poverty that characterised the early settlement of the study area, this strong theme of charity and philanthropy is woven like a thread through many of the themes discussed in this chapter and is one of the most significant aspects of the culture of the study area today.

This chapter incorporates the following themes:

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV)
Places where people independently congregated/frequented/travelled (not known if association originates in pre-contact period).

Australian Heritage Criteria (AHC)
Educating: Forming associations, libraries and institutes for self-education, Establishing schools; Developing Australia's cultural life: Organising recreation, Forming associations, Worshipping, Remembering the fallen, Pursuing excellence in the arts; Marking the phases of life.

HISTORY

10.1 Living as traditional owners

As discussed in Chapter 2, the area that now comprises the Royal Botanic Gardens and Government House (outside the study area) was an important meeting place for the tribes of the Kulin Nation. People continued to gather periodically at this location and in journals by William Thomas (reproduced in *Historical Records of Victoria*) he wrote that 'there have been 300 natives of 3 different tribes for near three months near this settlement'. It is therefore not surprising that there are a number of places on or just outside the border of the study area that continued to act as meeting places for Aboriginal people. Throughout the mid–1800s, people often camped on the hill behind Christ Church in what is now Fawkner Park. It was reported the people continued to build mia-mias (temporary shelters) and hunt what game remained in the area. Other camping grounds were reported on the corners of Punt and Toorak roads and St Kilda and Toorak roads (Eidelson 1997:86–87) and Presland (1985:32) wrote that Aboriginal people camped in the vicinity of what is now Chapel Street.

Community & culture

The 300-year-old St Kilda Corroboree tree, literally on the border of the study area at the corner of Fitzroy Street and Queens Road, marks an Aboriginal meeting place. It is thought to have been a place where people gathered to conduct important ceremonial business prior to European occupation and subsequently became a fringe camp. Eidelson (1997:40) describes the location as historically and socially important because it witnessed both the cultural change and ongoing attachment to place that has been so indicative of the Aboriginal experience since the 1830s.

10.2 Worshipping

As McDougall (1985:6) has pointed out, the building of a church in a new settlement was a symbol of permanence and security. In the nineteenth century, Christianity was taken for granted as part of life for most people of Anglo-Celtic origins. Church-going, besides being an essential expression of faith, was also a means of establishing respectability and social ties within communities, and of upholding public morality. Churches were founded before their chapels were constructed, holding early worship services and meetings in private homes, hotels, schoolrooms, and even a bowling alley. Early churches were often built of cheap materials such as timber, while some were prefabricated metal structures, which were replaced with more solid and imposing structures of brick or basalt as congregations grew. Nonconformist Protestants led the way with the earliest buildings. This is perhaps due to the strong lay participation, which allowed local people to take the initiative without waiting for diocesan involvement as was the case with Anglicans and Catholics. Nonconformists also tended to go for plainer, therefore less costly, buildings.

The various denominations were generally markers of social status in the early years of settlement. The Church of England (Anglican) was the church of the establishment, although 'C of E' also covered Low Church parishes such as St. Mathew's, Prahran, as well as people with no particular religious affiliations. People of Scottish origin, including many of the wealthy squatting families, were Presbyterians, and the Catholics were predominantly the Irish poor. Nonconformist Protestants, such as the Methodists, Baptists and Independents, tended to be made up of working-class and lower middle-class English.

For many church members social life revolved around the church. Drinking alcohol and going to the pub were frowned upon by the nonconformist churches until the last few decades of the twentieth century, as was dancing – at least until World War II. Dulcie Wilkie grew up in Malvern East in the 1920s and '30s and her family belonged to the Darling Road Methodist Church:

… there was a lot of social life in the church. In fact the church was the fulcrum of your whole life. There was the Ladies' Guild and there was the Men's Club, there was the Christian Endeavour. The ladies gymnasium class was on a Monday night, and the men's gymnasium was another. Choir was Thursday, tennis was on a Saturday. … We had children's concerts, Sunday school anniversary was a highlight (recorded interview 27 July 2000, MECWA).

The churches were also the social conscience of the community, and most of the institutions concerned with providing care for the needy were set up by churches or church members. This will be discussed further in section 10.3 – Helping other people.

As we shall see, Christian churches were thus extremely influential in founding communities and developing social networks throughout the study area. However, in the second half of the twentieth century falling church attendance and changing demographic conditions were reflected in new uses for some church buildings and in the opening of new churches by immigrant groups.

cxxv *The first Presbyterian Church, Glenferrie Road, Malvern, c.1885.*
[SLHC Reg. No. 104]

10.2.1 Founding churches

It was customary for the Colonial Government to make grants of land for churches of the main denominations in each area of settlement. However, as all the land in the west of the study area was sold – mainly to speculators – by 1850, no reserves of land for churches were made in the Prahran municipality. Early residents attended churches just outside the borders in Punt Road and Dandenong Road, or travelled to churches in Melbourne.

The first church to be built in the study area symbolised the founding of community, because it gave its name to Prahran's main thoroughfare. The small Independent (Congregational) Chapel was opened in 1850, a few months after the first Divine Service was held in Ellis's cottage. According to Joseph Crook, one of Prahran's earliest residents:

The chapel was erected by voluntary subscriptions. J. Morrison, brickmaker, of Domain Road, gave the bricks, which he made on his ground near the hotel in that road; Ellis's gave the stone and undertook the cartage; Westbury, timber merchant, of Bourke street, Melbourne, gave the timber; W. Jennings, of Melbourne, did the brick work; Chamney, Howard and I, the labour and carpentry; my father and brother the painter's and glazier's work; the heads of other families contributing cash. The chapel was completed and the Rev. W. Morrison preached the first sermon and opened the building in December 1850 (Crook, 1897).

This was the only place of worship in Prahran for two years, and it was also the meeting place for other community groups. The building, which no longer exists, soon became inadequate for the growing community, and a new bluestone church was built in Malvern Road near Chapel Street in 1858. The Prahran Independent Church founded the Christian Endeavour Movement – a kind of Sunday School for young people, which was adopted by other Protestant churches – and also the Melbourne Bible Institute, a training college for ministers and missionaries, which occupied *Armadale* from 1941–77 (McDougall, 1985:13–17).

Methodist

The Methodists were also well represented in early Prahran. Services were held in a cottage in the 1850s, before the first chapel, a prefabricated iron building, known as the 'iron pot', was erected on the corner of Commercial Road and Margaret Street in 1852. In 1864 a new bluestone church was built on the corner of Commercial and Punt roads. The story of the Prahran Methodist Church continues under the section on the Prahran Mission below. Many other Methodist churches were founded and built throughout the study area as the population grew and the suburbs expanded. Perhaps the most impressive Methodist building was the Jubilee Church in Toorak, which was built in 1886; however, Methodism was not as strong as in Prahran and other parts of the study area (McDougall, 1985:13–17). Toorak people were more likely to be Anglicans or Presbyterians. The Jubilee Church was damaged by fire after it was closed and subsequently demolished in the 1990s.

Other Protestant denominations were represented from the time of early settlement, including the Baptists and the Churches of Christ, both of which pioneered their denominations from the study area. The Baptists commenced worshipping in South Yarra in 1853, and built their first church in Brewer (now Charles) Street. The South Yarra Baptist Church on the corner of Chapel and Wilson streets was built in 1866, and from there the Baptist Union of Victoria was formed. The first Church of Christ in Victoria commenced services in Prahran in 1853. Early services were held in a bowling alley, then the Mechanics' Institute. The Church of Christ chapel was built in High Street in the 1880s (McDougall, 1985:69–74).

cxxvi Former Methodist Church and Sunday School, 53 Alma Street, Malvern East. [SLHC Reg. No. 9535]

Community & culture

Catholic

Catholics were concentrated in the working-class parts of Prahran and South Yarra. The first Catholic masses were celebrated in Glasgow's Public House in East St Kilda in 1853. A small church, St Mary's, was built on land granted by the Government on the south side of Dandenong Road in the same year. In 1869 this building was replaced by a larger church designed by William Wardell (who also designed St Patrick's Cathedral and St John's Church of England, Toorak). South Yarra Catholics were granted land in Punt Road, opposite Argo Street (outside the study area), but the site was sold and another site purchased in Fitzgerald Street, closer to the working-class houses of the parishioners. St Joseph's Church was built there in 1888. Catholics from Toorak and Armadale attended St Joseph's until St Stanislaus' Church was built on part of the former Toorak House Estate in 1912. Local Protestant families contributed funds, probably so that their Catholic servants could have a church close by. This church was replaced by St Peter's in 1922, and became the fashionable church for 'mixed marriages', that is, between Catholics and Protestants (McDougall, 1985:56–63). Early Malvern was also dominated by Protestants, and local Catholics had no church of their own until the first St Joseph's was opened in Stanhope Street in 1890 (Strahan, 1989:90; Cooper, 1935:178). The old church became the Parish Hall when it was replaced by the present church designed by A.A. Fritsch in 1908.

Church of England

Although the largest denomination in the early years of Victoria's settlement, the Church of England was relatively slow in providing places of worship for their members in the study area. Land grants for the western part of the study area for local Anglicans were just outside the study area, in Punt Road, South Yarra (Christ Church) and Chapel Street, East St Kilda (All Saints). At the eastern end of the municipality, in Warrigal Road, the Holy Trinity Church was established on land granted by the Government for Church of England purposes. Land in Glenferrie Road was also reserved for where St George's Church was established.

St Matthew's was the first Church of England to commence inside the study area. Services were held in a cottage in 1853, and then in the Church of England Schoolroom in Chapel Street, which became known as 'St Matthew's (temporary) Church'. The permanent Church of St Matthew was built in High Street, Prahran, and opened in 1878 (McDougall, 1985:28–30).

The origins of St George's Anglican Church, Malvern, can be traced to Sunday School classes commenced in the home of Colin Campbell, *Haverbrack*, in Malvern Road in the mid–1850s. The schoolroom built in Glenferrie Road in 1857 was also licensed for church services, until St George's Church was built beside it and opened in 1871 (Cooper, 1935:172–75).

The oldest existing church building at the eastern end of the study area is Liddiard Hall, constructed in 1858 from site–fired handmade bricks on the corner of Dandenong and Warrigal roads. This building was the original Holy Trinity Church of England. A larger church building was constructed in 1919 (A Place in History, No.71).

cxxvii (right) St George's Church, Glenferrie Road, Malvern in 1888.
[SLHC Reg. No. 103]

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Independent or Congregational Church

One of the earliest churches in the study area was established in 1858 by the United Free Methodist Church on a site in Peel Street, Windsor. It replaced an earlier galvanised iron building on the site that was originally owned by the Independent or Congregational Church. In 1866 most of the congregation decided to join the Congregational Church. In 1977 it became part of the Uniting Church and the final service was held in 1979.

10.2.2 Churches as a reflection of social and economic status of suburbs

The first Anglican Church built in Toorak was St John the Evangelist, founded as a separate parish from Christ Church in 1859. The building, designed by William Wardell, was opened in July 1860 by the Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry Barkly, who would have been the church's most distinguished parishioner. St John's Toorak became the fashionable church for Melbourne's prominent and wealthy citizens and was *the* church for society weddings (McDougall, 1985:35–36).

The Presbyterians also had a strong presence in Toorak, following early beginnings in temporary buildings in South Yarra and Prahran. Services were commenced in the school hall in Jackson Street, Toorak, in 1868. The Toorak Presbyterian Church in Toorak Road was opened in 1875. One of its founders was Francis Ormond, a wealthy pastoralist and philanthropist who was also the founder of the Workingmen's College (now RMIT University) (McDougall, 1985:42–46, Malone, 2004:37). The Hawksburn Presbyterian Church was built on the corner of Cromwell Road and Motherwell Street in 1888, but was replaced in 1964 by the Cairnmiller Institute, which, under Rev. Dr Francis Macnab, combined religion and psychology for the treatment of psychiatric patients. The building continued as a church for those who agreed with the new development and in 1984 merged with the Prahran Parish Mission of the Uniting Church (McDougall, 1985:48–50).

The Salvation Army, an evangelical church with a particular mission to the poor and needy, commenced its work in Australia when Major Barker and his wife arrived in Melbourne in 1876. They were responsible for building the Salvation Army's first purpose-built citadel in Australia in Victoria Street, Windsor, in 1883. This building later became the Prahran Migrant Resource Centre (Cooper, 1924:219; *A Place in History*, No.23).

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cxxxi *Greek Orthodox Church, High Street, Prahran.*
[Context 2005]

10.2.3 Churches as an illustration of key phases of suburban development

As suburban development spread through the study area, new churches of the major denominations were established as demand arose among the newly formed congregations. The location and building dates of these churches help to illustrate key phases of suburban development. For example, Ewing Memorial Presbyterian Church (now Uniting Church) began meeting in a butcher's shop off Burke Road, Malvern East, in 1891, at the end of the building boom. However, a permanent church in Burke Road was not constructed until 1906, when the economy had recovered and suburban development of Malvern East re-commenced (Strahan, 1989:86–87). In some cases, buildings were moved around to meet demand: The weatherboard church hall now at 53 Alma Street, Malvern East, began life in about 1890 as a Methodist Church in Glendearg Grove. In 1904 when a new brick church was built, it was used as a Sunday School. In 1928 the front portion of the building including the porch was moved to its present site where it was once again used as a church until a new church was erected in 1958 (Malvern Archives).

10.2.4 Churches as a reflection of changing demographics

Other changes in the churches of the study area reflect the arrival of new ethnic groups. In the 1960s the Greek community purchased the old Baptist Church in Charles Street, Prahran, but it collapsed under the weight of a new roof in 1968. By then Prahran had a second Greek Orthodox Church in the former Mt Erica Methodist Church, bought in 1963. In 1970 the Greek community opened their new purpose-built Orthodox Church of St Constantine and St Helen in Barry Street, South Yarra (McDougall, 1985:64–66).

Melbourne's small Swedish community did not appear to have any particular attachment to the study area when the Swedish (Lutheran) Church planned to move from South Melbourne to larger premises. Australia's Swedish community had grown following the introduction of the General Assisted Passage Scheme to Scandinavians in 1952. The property the Church bought was *Toorak House*, the former nineteenth-century Governor's residence, which was at the end of its life as a grand mansion for the wealthy. The Swedish Church very likely saved *Toorak House* from demolition, and what remained of the property from subdivision. The Swedish Church had a tradition of ministering to Scandinavian seamen, and was also a cultural centre for Scandinavians. These roles were continued when the Church opened at *Toorak House* in 1956 (McDougall, 1985:67–69; Jupp, 1988:810).

The formation of the Uniting Church in Australia, in 1977, from the amalgamation of the Congregational and Methodist Churches and some of the Presbyterian Churches, together with falling church attendances, resulted in a number of redundant church buildings in the study area. Some have been adapted for re-use – the former Prahran Independent Chapel in Malvern Road is now the *Chapel Off Chapel* Performing Arts Centre.

cxxxii Convent of the Good Shepherd, Chadstone, in 1985. Demolished to make way for extensions to the Chadstone Shopping Centre.
[SLHC Reg. No. 7734]

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10.3 Helping other people

The study area has a strong tradition of helping others – needy people in the local community and further afield – through a variety of institutions and groups. Many of these were set up by churches or their members, reflecting the needs and concerns of the generation. Many philanthropists and charity workers have lived in the wealthy parts of the study area, and have made their homes available for charity functions. Charity was not entirely the province of the wealthy and working-class Prahran has had its share of charity workers. Among the working class, self-help in the form of mutual societies also flourished.

Though little physical evidence remains of these early institutions, they were important episodes in the history of the community in the study area of helping other people.

10.3.1 Neglected children and 'fallen' women

Charitable institutions reflected both the needs and moral attitudes of the era. Of concern in the nineteenth century were neglected children and 'fallen' women. Concern over the number of neglected or orphaned children wandering the streets in the years following the gold rushes had led to the passing of the *Neglected and Criminal Children's Act* 1864, which provided for the establishment of reformatories and industrial schools. This was essentially a crime-prevention measure, designed to train those children perceived to be exposed to a life of crime to become respectable workers. The Convent of the Good Shepherd, built in 1883 in Chadstone, was one such institution. It took in girls deemed to be in need of care and protection, and provided them with academic, domestic and commercial training. Chadstone Shopping Centre now occupies the Convent site (Barnard and Twigg, 2004:25; *A Place in History*, No.69).

Perhaps the influence of the rural atmosphere on the edge of the metropolis was considered suitable for such institutions, because the Salvation Army also had their Industrial School for girls at the eastern end of the study area. *Belgrave* (1215 Dandenong Road) the house built in 1873 for Robert Glover Benson, a long-term Malvern Shire Councillor, was leased to the Salvation Army from 1898 to 1912 (*A Place in History*, No.67).

The Try Boys' Society, commenced in 1883, was a different approach to the problem of children on the streets. It was founded by Toorak merchant William Mark Foster to give underprivileged boys the opportunity to learn self-reliance through activities such as singing, sport and reading. The club commenced in Foster's home but soon moved to St John's Sunday School building. In 1887 the Toorak and South Yarra Try Boys' Society built its own hall on land in Surrey Road donated by Mrs Margaret Hobson. A similar club for girls was started in 1895. After the Try Society broadened its interests and moved elsewhere its building was used as a gymnasium until its demolition in 1995 (Wilde, 1993:243; Malone, 2000:46–48).

cxxxiii (right) Toorak and South Yarra Try Boys' Society (demolished) in Cromwell Crescent in 1906. [SLHC Reg. No. 7236]

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Malvern resident, Councillor and MLA for Toorak Alex McKinley was appointed a special magistrate for the Children's Court in 1907, serving as its Chairman for twenty years. He was President of the Children's Welfare Association and had a long connection with the Latrobe Street Mission School. McKinley fought in Parliament for legislation for children's welfare and the *Children's Court Amending Act 1917* was largely his work. McKinley Avenue in Malvern is named in his honour (Malvern Archives).

In 1885 the Swinborn family, who were Quakers, opened a refuge and training centre for women, mainly ex-prisoners and alcoholics. The centre, called the Elizabeth Fry Retreat, after the English Quaker social reformer, was in Argo Street, South Yarra. It was run by the Swinborns until after World War II, when it was taken over by the Melbourne City Mission. It closed in the 1970s and the site is now the Argo Reserve (Malone, 1998:32–33).

The Methodist Babies Home was set up in 1929 at Copelen Street, South Yarra, by a group of Methodist laymen who wanted to 'rescue' neglected children from Melbourne's slums. It was also the place where babies of single women were kept while awaiting adoption, in an era when single motherhood was not socially or morally acceptable, nor economically possible for most women. The Home was supported by Victoria's Methodist community. Win Vears remembers the Blue Book scheme, by which small amounts of money were collected regularly from church members:

… you paid threepence or sixpence a week into it. And you just put a pinprick on it. They had young ones at the church doing it, you were asked would you do it. And I collected when I was about twelve years of age for the Blue Book. (recorded interview, 5 July 2000, MECWA)

As social attitudes changed and single mothers were no longer ostracised by society but supported with government benefits introduced in the 1970s, the Methodist Babies Home changed its function and its name. As Copelen Family Services, run by the Uniting Church, the emphasis was on supporting families in caring for their own children, by providing temporary care in nurseries. Eventually it was decided to consolidate Uniting Church family services and locate them elsewhere. In the early 1990s the Copelen Street site was sold for residential development. All that is left of the old Babies Home is a stand of gum trees in the former garden (Vears, recorded interview, 5 July 2000, MECWA; Malone, 2000:12–14).

10.3.2 Institutes for blind and deaf children

There are some large institutions on the doorstep of the study area, which also relate to the theme of helping others. Both the Victorian School for the Deaf and the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind had their origins in the study area. The first school for deaf people was opened in Peel Street, Windsor, in 1860. Its founder, Frederick Rose, a builder, lived at *Oxonia* (3 Foster Avenue, Malvern). The Independent Church's first minister, the Rev. W. Moss took an interest in the school, so it is possible that the school was first conducted in the small Independent Chapel (72 Peel Street, Windsor) that had opened in 1858. The school moved to other sites in Henry Street, Nelson Street and the site of South Yarra's first Methodist chapel on the corner of Commercial Road and Margaret Street, before it settled on its present site in St Kilda Road in 1866 (Cooper, 1924:212; Malone, 1998:31–32; Crook, 1897; *Malvern Heritage Study*, p.127; McDougall, 1985:17–18).

The former South Yarra Methodist chapel was then taken over by the newly formed Institute for the Blind, in which Rev. Moss was also involved. After the Institute moved to St Kilda Road, the site was used for the Braille Library, founded in 1894. The building that houses the present Braille and Talking Book Library was built in 1918. Blind people tended to live in Prahran, South Yarra and Windsor, close to the Institute and in the 1930s there was a broom factory employing blind workers (Wilde, 1993:152).

cxxxiv *Braille Library and Hall, Commercial Road, Prahran.*
[SLHC Reg. No. 13332]

Community & culture

10.3.3 Prahran Mission

Prahran Mission is unique in the study area. It is a church that turned itself into a mission with the sole aim of helping people 'to live their lives with more resource, dignity and self-respect' (Malone, 1984:62). The Prahran Methodist Mission was formed in 1946 when the Prahran Methodist Church sold off its property and bought the former Holt's Chambers, a commercial building in the heart of the Chapel Street shopping centre. The building became the Mission's worship centre, and also the centre of a huge network of services to the needy. Services included clubs for women and children, craft centres, day nurseries, chiropody and dental services, firewood for the elderly, a cafeteria providing cheap meals for anyone and free meals for the destitute and homeless, an opportunity shop, rehabilitation for alcoholics and drug addicts and support for other people marginalised by society. The Mission became part of the new Uniting Church in 1977, and has continued to introduce new activities wherever needed (Malone, 1984:62–65).

An interesting dimension of the work of the Mission is that it relies on the voluntary services of a large number of people, many of whom are not particularly well-off themselves. Pensioner Bobbie Nugent who worked there as a cook in the 1990s explained:

There are several kinds of volunteers at the Mission. There are volunteers who have personality problems etcetera, and they take them into the volunteer situation to help them to blend in with people and help handle their daily life. They're called 'participant volunteers'. Then there's volunteers that must do a minimum of eight hours a week, and they're on a government allowance called a 'mobility allowance'. And then there's my kind of volunteer that goes in and that's it, just do your job. I only do two days now because I'm getting old, slowing down. But I like it because you see people, everybody knows you (Recorded interview, 18 September 2000, MECWA).

10.3.4 MECWA Community Care

Another unique home-grown organisation, Malvern Elderly Citizens Welfare Association (now known as MECWA Community Care) was established in 1958 by a group of people concerned for the aged in their local district. Care of the aged had traditionally taken place in the family, and people without family support relied on charity, because governments provided few aged-care facilities. With the support of Malvern Town Clerk Dudley Lucas, MECWA's founders took on the responsibility of providing meals on wheels, and building and running retirement villages, nursing homes and day centres. Most of its early volunteers were gathered from local churches. They raised money through opportunity shops, lamington drives and social functions. MECWA's early headquarters were in the newly built Elderly Citizens' Centre next to the Malvern Cricket Ground (demolished), where volunteers prepared and despatched meals on wheels. Their first opportunity shop opened at 136 Wattletree Road in 1964. MECWA had a number of wealthy and influential members and links with 'establishment' people. Under the patronage of people such as former Liberal Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies, MECWA could attract large donations for their fundraising appeals. The organisation's first hostel, MECWA House, opened in Warner's Lane in 1973. Several other aged care facilities followed. MECWA's activities expanded beyond local boundaries and widened to include services for people with intellectual disabilities. The D.W. Lucas Oval in Dunlop Street honours a former Malvern Town Clerk, and a MECWA founder (Marshall, 1998; *A Place in History*, No.64).

10.3.5 Working-class self-help

Prahran Mechanics' Institute

The workers of Prahran and district had access to a number of organisations which were established specifically by working-class people to promote their own welfare. The Mechanics' Institute movement was originally a form of self-improvement for working people who had little access to higher education or book learning. As already mentioned, early technical education in Victoria originated in Mechanics' Institutes, with one of the most successful outcomes in Prahran. The Prahran Mechanics' Institute commenced in Chapel Street in 1854. It held lectures and debates, and opened its library in 1861. The Institute moved to its present High Street address in 1915. It continued as a library in competition with the Municipal Library, although after World War I the library lost its educational focus (Malone, 1999: 4–5; Wilde, 1993:216–17).

Friendly societies and the temperance movement

Friendly societies originated in eighteenth-century England as a way of providing self-help and mutual support among working people. With no state welfare, the societies were an important form of social security. Members made regular contributions of a few pence to a fund upon which they could draw if unable to work because of illness. Funds were also available to pay funeral expenses and support widows and orphans of members. Victoria was the stronghold of friendly societies, probably because of its industrial base. It has been estimated that in 1890 up to one in three people in Victoria came under the protective umbrella of a friendly society (Blainey, 1991:22–23). Friendly societies were well represented in the working-class areas of Prahran and Windsor. The United Order of Oddfellows built a hall in Windsor, which later became a picture theatre, and later still a cabaret. Foresters and other societies were also represented in the area. Although meetings were sometimes held in hotels, friendly societies generally promoted temperance, as sobriety was regarded akin to respectability and prosperity. United Friendly Societies Dispensaries were built in Cecil Place, Prahran and Valetta Street, Malvern.

cxxxv *Independent Order of Rechabites Hall, Little Chapel Street, Prahran.*
[SLHC Reg. No. 13336]

cxxxvi Independent Order of Rechabites: the procession leaving the Tent-room in October 1888 for the laying of the foundation stone for the Independent Order of Rechabites Hall in Clarence Street (now Little Chapel Street).
[SLHC Reg. No. 12303]

The Independent Order of Rechabites was the temperance group most strongly opposed to the use of alcohol. One of their main goals was the promotion of total abstinence. Friendly societies built meeting halls, some of which were quite elaborate during the boom years, for their meetings and social activities. Prahran's Rechabite Hall, the Perseverance Tent No 34 – the Rechabites always called their branches and halls 'tents' in honour of a Biblical character who was a total abstainer and tent dweller – in Little Chapel Street was built at the height of the boom in 1889, replacing an earlier hall built in 1871. Perseverance Tent had a strong association with Victorian Premier, temperance crusader and 'landboomer' James Munro, who was a Charter Member and Chief Ruler (Malone, 2001:48–9; *A Place in History*, No.21).

cxxxvii (left) Prahran Mechanics' Institute, on the original Chapel Street site, c.1900. [SLHC Reg. No. 8545]