

Palermo Estate Precinct, South Yarra Statement of Significance

Heritage Place: Palermo Estate Precinct, South Yarra

PS ref no: HO128



What is significant?

The Palermo Estate Precinct, South Yarra comprising 1-37 & 2-32 Cunningham Street, 1-25 & 2-30 Palermo Street, 11A-13 & 12-16 Oxford Street and 14 Forster Street, South Yarra is significant. These streets were subdivided in 1877 with all houses constructed between 1877 and 1919. The following properties are Non-contributory to the precinct: 2, 4, 14, 16, 18 & 22 Cunningham Street and 18 Palermo Street. The rest are contributory. The bluestone pitched kerbs, channels and laneways also contribute to the significance.

How is it significant?

The Palermo Estate Precinct, South Yarra, is of local historic, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The Palermo Estate Precinct is of historical significance as tangible evidence of the influence of both public transport and employment centres on the construction of housing in South Yarra. Bolstered by the extension of the rail line from South Yarra to Oakleigh in 1879, the introduction of special workingmen's fares in 1882 and the opening of tramway lines along Toorak Road and Chapel Street in 1888, the area saw a rapid expansion in the development of local industries which in turn saw an acceleration of residential development. Halted by the depression of the 1890s the area saw a second wave of residential development after the establishment of the Tramways Trust in 1910 brought easier access and new employment opportunities. (Criterion A)

The precinct is significant for its illustration of popular residential architectural styles of the Victorian, Edwardian, and interwar periods with a relatively high intactness of buildings.

The precinct is of architectural significance for its collection of Victorian Italianate terrace rows, cottages and houses that, although modestly scaled, illustrate the stylish dwellings that were occupied by trade and service-industry workers of South Yarra during the nineteenth century. The modestly scaled dwellings, which comprise a high proportion of terrace rows and single-fronted houses and some semi-detached dwellings on smaller allotments, provide evidence of the more modest finances of the original occupiers. The predominant style in the late nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth century was the Italianate. These houses display characteristic elements such as low-pitched hipped roofs, chimneys with a rendered cornice, bracketed eaves, front verandahs with chamfered posts or Corinthian columns and cast-iron ornament, double-hung sash windows often with sidelights, and four-panelled front doors.

'Albert Terrace', built in 1877 at 23-33 Cunningham Street, stands out within the precinct for both its size and refinement in detail. Simply designed, this two-storey brick terrace row displays a restraint in detail that is more commonly associate with earlier Victorian regency architecture. This is evident in the symmetrical arrangement and rhythm of the principal façade, long narrow proportion of the first-floor widows, lack of applied ornamentation, other than a centrally placed pediment with decorative scrolls and the word Albert Terrace embossed, and the understated use of cast iron brackets to the verandah.

Two properties along Cunningham Street reflect a slightly later period of development. These are the single storey semi-detached pair of Federation Queen Anne houses at Nos. 35-37 built in 1905, and the Interwar duplex at no. 20 built in 1919.

2-18 Palermo Street are representative of a transitional style between earlier Federation architecture and the Californian Bungalow of the 1920s. Simply detailed these houses all display similar design characteristics indicating that they were built by a single builder. (Criterion D)

While most of the houses in the precinct have typical Victorian Italianate forms and details, their rapid construction by a small group of builders has been created by an unusually high level of overall consistency in the streetscapes, as well as a small point of difference. The distinctive streetscape of Palermo Street is characterised by its numerous rows of attached single storey brick cottages. Streetscapes of these terrace rows are becoming increasingly rare within this section of Stonnington due to a significant amount of demolition that occurred in the 1960s for the Housing Commission of Victoria and recent development pressures. The streetscapes themselves are enhanced by the retention of the streets asphalt surface, bluestone kerbing and guttering and asphalt foot paths with no nature strips. (Criterion E)

Grades

<i>Number</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Grade</i>
1	Cunningham Street	Contributory
3	Cunningham Street	Contributory

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5	Cunningham Street	Contributory
7	Cunningham Street	Contributory
9	Cunningham Street	Contributory
11	Cunningham Street	Contributory
13	Cunningham Street	Contributory
15	Cunningham Street	Contributory
17	Cunningham Street	Contributory
19	Cunningham Street	Contributory
21	Cunningham Street	Contributory
23	Cunningham Street	Contributory
25	Cunningham Street	Contributory
27	Cunningham Street	Contributory
29	Cunningham Street	Contributory
31	Cunningham Street	Contributory
33	Cunningham Street	Contributory
35	Cunningham Street	Contributory
37	Cunningham Street	Contributory
2	Cunningham Street	Non-contributory
4	Cunningham Street	Non-contributory
6	Cunningham Street	Contributory
8	Cunningham Street	Contributory
10	Cunningham Street	Contributory
12	Cunningham Street	Contributory
16	Cunningham Street	Non-contributory
18	Cunningham Street	Non-contributory
20	Cunningham Street	Contributory
22	Cunningham Street	Non-contributory
24	Cunningham Street	Contributory
26	Cunningham Street	Contributory
28	Cunningham Street	Contributory
30	Cunningham Street	Contributory
32	Cunningham Street	Contributory
14	Forster Street	Contributory
12	Oxford Street	Contributory
14	Oxford Street	Contributory
16	Oxford Street	Contributory
11	Oxford Street	Contributory
13	Oxford Street	Contributory
2	Palermo Street	Contributory
4	Palermo Street	Contributory
6	Palermo Street	Contributory
12	Palermo Street	Contributory
14	Palermo Street	Contributory
16	Palermo Street	Contributory
18	Palermo Street	Contributory
18A	Palermo Street	Non-contributory
20	Palermo Street	Contributory
22	Palermo Street	Contributory
24	Palermo Street	Contributory
26	Palermo Street	Contributory
28	Palermo Street	Contributory
30	Palermo Street	Contributory
1	Palermo Street	Contributory
3	Palermo Street	Contributory
5	Palermo Street	Contributory
7	Palermo Street	Contributory
9	Palermo Street	Contributory
11	Palermo Street	Contributory

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13	Palermo Street	Contributory
15	Palermo Street	Contributory
17	Palermo Street	Contributory
19	Palermo Street	Contributory
21	Palermo Street	Contributory
23	Palermo Street	Contributory
25	Palermo Street	Contributory
27	Palermo Street	Contributory

Primary source

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