

THORNBURY PARK ESTATE PRECINCT

Address	Comas Grove (part), Fyffe Street (part), Harold Street (part), Hobson Street (part), Hutton Street (part), Keon Street (part), Miller Street (part), Rennie Street (part), Smith Street (part), and Taylor Street (all)
Significance	Local
Construction Dates	circa 1912 to circa 1940
Period	Federation and Interwar
Date Inspected	2019/2020



Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The following original elements contribute to the significance of the Thornbury Park Estate Precinct:

Generally:

- single-storey dwellings,
- consistent setbacks.

Buildings dating to the Federation period:

- Intact roof forms - typically gabled with a main gambrel or hipped section,
- Original type of roof cladding - mostly corrugated metal sheeting, some with terracotta tiles, a few finials,
- Intact chimneys – usually with defined caps, mainly face brick but some rendered or with rendered elements,
- Finishes to gable ends - mainly roughcast sheeting with battens, a few with distinctive bargeboards,
- Intact timber-framed walls of painted weatherboard, some with roughcast sheeting,

- Verandahs - mainly offset or corner types, with turned timber posts, brackets or fretwork/friezes,
- Bay windows, some with hoods,
- Timber-framed windows - mainly casements with highlights, some double-hung sashes, some lead lighting and stained glass,
- Timber doors - typically panelled with some glazing, some with a sidelight.

Buildings dating to the Interwar period:

- Intact roof forms - gable, often with exposed rafter ends (1920s); or hipped (1930s),
- Original type of roof cladding - mostly corrugated metal sheeting, some tiled, and a few finials (metal or terracotta),
- Intact chimneys - mainly face brick but some rendered,
- Finishes to gable ends – including shingles or shingled boards, upper lattice vent,
- Intact timber-framed walls of painted weatherboard, some with roughcast sheeting (bungalows/1920s),
- Intact brick walls - red, clinker, cream; some (partly) rendered (generally 1930s), some tuck-pointing,
- Masonry porches - balustrade wall (brick and/or render) and/or piers with tapered or Solomonic columns; some with timber decks (1920s); smaller masonry porches (1930s),
- Bay windows - many faceted with a shingled skirt,
- Timber-framed windows - including boxed-framed, mainly double-hung sashes (some with multi-paned upper sashes) but also casements, some lead lighting and stained/textured glass (geometric designs), some hoods,
- Original timber doors - typically with some glazing,
- Original low brick fences – face brick and/or rendered (1930s),
- Commercial buildings - both single and two storey with parapets, with more elaborate detailing to the two storey. A pair with an expressed roof in Miller Street.

Refer to separate schedules (for each street) for significant, contributory, and non-contributory places:

How is it Significant?

The Thornbury Park Estate Precinct, Thornbury, is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Darebin.

Why is it Significant?

The Thornbury Park Estate Precinct is of historical significance as a large subdivision that illustrates the emergence and rapid consolidation of Thornbury as a residential suburb during the early to mid-20th century, changing from its hitherto largely rural character, especially at its western end. Whilst two subdivisions had occurred during the 1880s in the vicinity, they had resulted in only sparse development at best by the end of the first decade of the 20th century. Both earlier subdivisions also employed the same name (Thornbury Park Estate) as they too derived from the extensive land holdings of Job Smith (CA 131+ 136, consisting of nearly 370 acres at their maximum), which came to be known as 'Thornbury Park', after a place in Hertfordshire. Smith built/lived in a farmhouse on the high ground near the west end of Smith Street, which survived to the mid-20th century. Smith maintained his farm, where he cultivated rare grasses, etc. until he eventually sold all the land during the late 1880s. Subsequently the land was retained in two large holdings (owned by the Commercial Bank of Australia, after the default by Australian and British Land Deposit Agency with the 1890s crash, and the Trustees Executors and Agency Co.) for over 20 years until there was sufficient cause to subdivide the land.

The Thornbury Park Estate precinct was mostly being offered for sale from late 1911, though not officially subdivided until 1914, at which time the subdivision of the smaller portion at the south-west corner was undertaken. Although sales were strong during the 1910s, substantial development did not occur in earnest until the early 1920s, after the opening of the St Georges Road electric tram (1920) and the electrification of the rail line (1921). Much of the ensuing construction was likely undertaken by builders such as Dunlop & Hunt and the prolific, local firm of Stewart & Davies. This pattern demonstrates the broader speculative dynamics in the district around this time and the integral part played by these types of builders in providing the suburban dream to a wide demographic. (Criterion A)

The Thornbury Estate Precinct is of representative significance for containing manifold good and generally intact examples of modest late Federation and Interwar period house designs, many of the type practiced by suburban builders, as well as examples of State Savings Bank homes. The prevailing Federation/Interwar period bungalow type (typically gabled roof form, asymmetric façade with a side porch in timber [Federation period] or masonry [Interwar period] with an underlying Arts and Crafts aesthetic) provides a cohesion to the precinct along with the remnant subdivision pattern, which is broadly interpretable as a mix of original allotments and others divided in half. The economical yet presentable housing stock, which is almost entirely detached, is indicative of standard types of residences constructed during the main development phase of the 1910s and 1920s – being mainly timber-framed with corrugated metal roof cladding. Differentiation is provided by employment of an array of detailing in varying combinations so that whilst similar, houses in small groups of consistent types are made individual (for instance, to the gable ends [shingling, battened sheeting, and/or lattice to apex, etc.] and bay windows [bowed or faceted]). Robust/broad elements to many porches such as tapered or helical/Solomonic columns are a distinguishing feature. The humbleness of the construction is evidenced however by the lack of 'extraneous' detailing such as decorative glasswork, which is common in more middle-class examples. The few latter houses – dating to the 1930s (or late Interwar period) tend to be brick with tiled roofs and are uniformly larger (though some are paired/semi-detached). The commercial buildings to Miller Street are a mixture of single storey and more elaborate, two storey examples reflecting contemporary design approaches and providing an intrinsic complementary component to this large residential precinct. (Criterion D)

The Thornbury Estate Precinct is of aesthetic significance for including two individually notable buildings. These two buildings are relatively substantial, have a greater level of detailing, and higher quality palette of materials than the more economical approach evident generally across the precinct. (Criterion E)

- 33 Comas Grove - this sprawling Californian Bungalow style house with red brick dado and roughcast rendered walls above has an original dormer. The garden retains a semi-circular driveway, beds with stone edging, and some substantial specimen trees.
- 145-147 Miller Street – commercial building with an array of retained classicising elements (detailing to the pediment, elongated hoods, and recessed windows with frames) and an unusually intact canopy with decorative metal sheeting (fascia and soffit).

Description

The Thornbury Park Estate Precinct encompasses a substantial suburban area generally bounded by Miller Street in the north, Smith Street in the south and Comas Grove in the west. Bracken Avenue bounds the precinct to the east, except for Keon Street and Rennie Street which extend to the rear of properties fronting St Georges Road. Its topography is generally flat.



Fyffe Street, facing east.

A gridiron street pattern, mainly established in 1911,¹ is evident and facilitate long-distance vistas of predominantly residential streetscapes. Bracken Avenue, now a landscaped pedestrian reserve, is the only disruption to this ordered grid, running diagonally south from Miller Street before terminating at Turner Reserve on the north side of Smith Street. Houses tend to address the east-west streets, less so the north-south streets, which were likely envisioned as functional link roads instead of residential streetscapes.

Carriageways are asphalt with concrete footpaths, kerbing, channelling, and crossovers, as well as grassed verges, standard. Basalt pitchers have been utilised sparingly in the precinct, chiefly in Smith Street, and mostly for channelling. Native street trees are present throughout and appear to be the result of planting efforts from the late 1930s or post-WWII period.²

Private landscaping in the precinct is diverse, but the majority of residences are set back from the street and have a front garden typified by lawn, shrubs and mature plantings, including a few examples with well-established indigenous/native and ornamental exotics.³ Only a handful of original driveways survive, usually dual concrete wheel-strips with a central grass island.

Few, if any, original front fences from the formative period of development (late Federation and early Interwar periods) appear to survive; these were likely timber pickets or timber-framed woven wire. Original, low masonry examples from the late Interwar period, in either red or clinker brick or cream with dark/umber brick band or cap are widespread. In some instances, earlier fencing was replaced during the late 1930s, or possibly to early post-war period. These replacements are typically in a complementary palette or style to the original house and so do not diminish the latter's contribution to the precinct.

¹ Smith Street preceded the other roads, having been defined in the 1887.

² Street trees are not apparent in the 1931 aerial photograph (refer below).

³ For instance, 33 Comas Grove, 98 Fyffe Street



104 Rennie Street – an attic-storey bungalow with a fine post-WWII period 'Art Deco' (stepped motif) front fence. Contributory



158A Hutton Street – 1920s bungalow with a likely late 1930s cream-brick fence with crenulated pattern. Contributory

A key aspect of the precinct's building stock is its diversity of traditional architectural elements. This creates numerous individualised presentations – although several essentially repeated early 1920s bungalow designs are evident – that nonetheless underlies cohesive streetscapes. Recurring designs/motifs heighten this effect, sometimes in small groups as well as interspersed throughout the precinct, which indicates the hand of a particular (it appears, largely contractor) builder.

Roof forms to contributory houses are predominantly gabled, either transverse or perpendicular in single or double/triple-tiered arrangement. Gambrel or hipped roofs are less frequent but respectively typify dwellings with a pronounced Queen Anne expression or houses from the late 1930s. Originally, as expected for economical suburban developments, a large proportion of houses in the precinct would have had roofs of painted corrugated galvanised iron, most of which are now replaced with corrugated metal sheeting.⁴ Unglazed (orange) or glazed (dark) terracotta tiles are also evident. As were, at some houses from the late 1930s, concrete tiles.

Most houses in the precinct retain their original chimney/s. Routinely, the mass of early Interwar bungalows have tall, plain, red-brick chimneys, situated to the rear or sides; only a few display roughcast treatment or details, such as corbelling and terracotta pots. In the late 1930s, chimneys became more often a 'feature' or prominent.

The preponderance of dwellings in the precinct are timber-framed and clad in painted weatherboards (plain profile). There are some interspersed examples with timber ashlar boards and serrated/scalloped boards. Masonry construction is rarer, although less so for later Interwar houses, which alongside the ubiquitous red brick of the early 20th century also employed render and variegated or plain cream brick.

Timber-framed windows prevail and are mostly double-hung timber sashes or, to a lesser extent, casement windows. Within the precinct, the earlier examples often feature a bowed or faceted bay to the façade. Whilst there are many examples with decorative glass, it is not a standard feature as in other parts of Melbourne. Leadlighting (square of diamond quarrels) and/or stained/textured glass (for instance to the upper panes of the casements and pane to entry door). The earlier designs feature red and green glass with floral motifs but by the late 1920s, these were succeeded by less colourful, geometric motifs. Many original timber doors survive with earlier examples being panelled with an upper pane (1910s/early 1920s) and later types have largely glazed, often with paired leaves.

The precinct's building stock predominantly derives from the early to mid-1920s. Broadly, this layer consists of bungalows; however, the design of many also drew on the earlier Queen Anne style, which peaked in popularity during the early 1910s. Accordingly, while there were only ever a small number of villas built across the precinct during the late Federation period, some Queen Anne characteristics were carried through to the subsequent bungalow development. While transitional in nature, the stylistic appellation, Federation Bungalow, is generally not appropriate as it relates to a different/more distinctive type than is evident in the precinct.

The basic underlying form to which this fluctuating blend of the Queen Anne style and bungalow mode was applied relatively consistent across the precinct – that of a modest rectilinear or square footprint which was single-fronted (often the combination of a recessed porch and projecting room) or double-fronted façade. The combination of a porch with a bay window, either adjacent

⁴ Original corrugated metal sheeting is identifiable by its short sheet length and overlapping joints.

or set back from another, routinely defines the façades of bungalows in the precinct. In instances where they are contiguous, the entrance is to the side (recessed).

Queen Anne

This idiom evolved from a free interpretation of the late 19th-century English Queen Anne Revival, emergent in Melbourne over the 1880s, and the broader Arts and Crafts movement. Australian-based architects (many of whom were London trained) acclimatised the English version, and its distinctive expression evolved into the dominant national mode of design by the early 1910s. Widely conceived as the articulation of a new and distinctive British-Australian architectural approach that was commensurate with the act of Federation, the Queen Anne style heralded a shift away from the classicising formality/ornamentation of the late Victorian period, although there remained an underlying preference for picturesque compositions. While routinely associated with red-brick walls and roofs of Marseille (terracotta) tiles, it was also commonly deployed in weatherboard, particularly in expanding suburbs, where it entered the vernacular of the speculative builder.⁵



93 Fyffe Street

Gambrel roof form with dual projecting gables (half-timber and roughcast sheeting), a diagonal expression and fretwork allude to the Queen Anne style, while other elements (quarrel leadlighting) are early Interwar in character.

Non-original roof cladding.

Cream brick fence dates to mid-20th century

Contributory



24 Rennie Street

Steeply pitched gable roof, clad in terracotta tiles, as is hipped roof of verandah; gable end with battens and roughcast finish, return timber verandah with posts and ladder fretwork frieze; tripartite window with casements and highlight;

Contributory

⁵ Conrad Hamann, 'Federation Architecture' and Noni Boyd, 'Queen Anne Revival', in Philip Goad and Julie Willis, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 245-46 and pp. 573-74



143 Harold Street

A transitional type - gable end, steeper pitched than most interwar places, however shingles to gable end more typical of interwar period; return timber verandah with posts and fretwork frieze; faceted bay window with casements that feature upper small panes. Contributory

As demonstrated by the precinct, while few buildings date to the heyday of the Queen Anne style – that is during the Federation period (broadly the circa 1900 to WWI) - aspects of this design mode were retained into the early 1920s. Several elements signal the continuity of the Queen Anne style, more steeply-pitched roofs (often hipped with a projecting gable), some with terracotta finials, roughcast and half-timbered effect to gable ends, and timber verandahs with turned posts, fretwork and brackets. Lead lighting with floral motifs, another hallmark, continued to be employed and in some instances, a diagonal expression.

There are several transitional examples in the precinct, that evenly intermingle characteristics of the Queen Anne and Bungalow styles, the latter which is discussed below.

Bungalow

The majority of dwellings in the precinct are bungalows. Portrayed in contemporary discussion and real estate argot as 'Californian style Bungalows', such houses were, in reality, an economical amalgam of more informal modes of residential design, revolving around a regionalised adaption of (primarily) west coast American bungalow elements and well-established Federation period idioms. The bungalow – heavily promoted across Australia by building magazines and institutions – was quickly embraced as the preferred type of development for middle-income families; its desirability bolstered by a perceived ruggedness, informality, scope for variation and strong association with the suburban ideal.⁶

Typically, the bungalow design mode is proclaimed by broad individual or tiered gables and the presence of a smaller front porch (either with a gable or flat roof) as opposed to a verandah. The latter emphasised by decorative masonry treatment (often the only use of brick at timber dwellings, other than the chimney/s). Types vary throughout the precinct but tapered columns (roughcast, smooth and combinations), classical columns or solid timber posts, all atop face brick or rendered pedestals, are standard as are solid low balustrades with rendered coping or decorative brickwork.

More limited in occurrence but repeated throughout the precinct is the use of rock-faced masonry (likely pre-cast concrete) to the pedestals and balustrade or Solomonian (helical) columns, often with a roughcast finished.

⁶

The expansion of the *credit foncier* loan system over the early 20th century was a key factor in the growth of Australian suburbs. In Victoria, the role of the State Saving Bank of Victoria (government-owned, 1842-1990) was prominent, particularly in promoting the bungalow style (colloquially, the 'State Bank Cal Bung') as the Interwar suburban vernacular. (Seamus O'Hanlon, 'State Bank Homes', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne, July 2008, <<http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01421b.htm>>, accessed 29 February 2020)



126 Keon Street – tapered roughcast finished columns and face brick pedestals to the porch. Timber shingles to gable end. Single-fronted recessed porch variant. Contributory



78 Keon Street – bands of serrated weatherboard, timber shingles to the base of the bow window, roughcast tapered piers, and timber lattice to the gable end. Contributory



24 Keon Street – transverse roof with broad street-facing gable (timber shingles and lattice). Note rock-faced masonry pedestal. Contributory



65 Keon Street – Solomonian columns to the porch. Flat-roof to bow window with exposed rafters. Contributory

Another marker of the bungalow was the use – often extensive – of wall hung timber shingles (gable ends or to the base of the façade/bay window). Decorative gable ventilators and timber lattice are also evident. Quarrel (diamond) leadlighting was particularly fashionable across the Interwar period as were toplights with frosted/coloured glass.

A smaller number of bungalows in the precinct also make varying levels of references to the Craftsman bungalow style. This subtype derived from the designs spread by Gustav Stickley's magazine, *The Craftsman* (1901-16) – a principal propagator of the American Arts and Crafts movement – as well as a contemporary interest in Australia with 'primitive simplicity'. It was generally defined by a rectangular form, symmetrical façades (central entrance) and a single-ridged front-facing or transverse gable roof, generally without projections (the porch instead, being recessed).⁷ In the precinct, this idiom is detectable more as an influence than a fully-fleshed out expression.

⁷ John Clare, *The post-Federation house in Melbourne: Bungalow and Vernacular Revival styles 1900-1930*, Faculty of Architecture and Planning, University of Melbourne, October 1984, Section 1.3



182 Smith Street – Craftsmen influenced bungalow, heavy use of timber shingling and particularly thick tapered columns. Note gable ventilator. Window modified, but double doors likely original; reoccurring design. Contributory



8 Keon Street – distinguishing window 'hood', clad in timber shingles, with quarrel leadlighting in the bay window. Queen Anne style referenced via steeper roof pitch; reoccurring design. Contributory



109 Keon Street – a rarer example of a brick bungalow in the precinct, likely late 1920s; some use of clinker-brick, however, note fretwork. Contributory



94 Fyffe Street – bungalow design incorporating a triple arched loggia porch with barely-twist column (Mediterranean/Spanish Mission influence). Contributory



33 Comas Grove – a sizable attic-storey Californian style bungalow, with roughcast rendered walls above a face brick plinth, constructed in 1925.

The dwelling sits lengthwise across the property, providing it with an elongated frontage with a series of traverse gable roofs, clad in glazed terracotta tiles. The façade is articulated by a broad street-facing gabled verandah (timber shingles and ventilator) and faceted bay with multi-paned windows. The dormer is original.

The bungalow is set within expansive grounds with ornamental plantings, rubble stone walls and a semi-circular concrete driveway – all indicative of early Interwar landscape design. The low front, cream-brick fence with dog-tooth pattern picked out in umber brick, is possibly post-WWII in origin. Significant.

Late Interwar period

Scattered through the precinct, are a small number of late 1930s brick/rendered houses that draw – in a purposely eclectic manner – from the various popular domestic styles (Old English/Tudor, Moderne, Mediterranean/Spanish Mission). A couple of these examples have small attached garages that are defined to one side by an unusual console-bracketed 'party' wall (possibly to emphasis the presence of the integrated garage, which at that time was an effective status symbol).



206 Harold Street – rendered/light colour influenced by the Mediterranean/Spanish Mission style, while the corbelled gable references the Old English idiom. Contributory



31A Comas Grove – late 1930s example of the Moderne style (curved elements) in click brick (an allusion to the Old English idiom). Contributory

Commercial

The Thornbury Park Estate Precinct also includes a cluster of Interwar commercial buildings that are contributory at Miller Street, either side of its intersection with Taylor Street. This run of shops developed over the late 1920s and forms part of a larger Interwar period commercial streetscape that extends opposite (north side of Miller Street) and along Gilbert Road – all of which is outside the precinct.⁸

The contributory commercial buildings are of one to two storeys and all of masonry construction with roofs concealed by mostly pedimented parapets – except for 129 and 131 Miller Street, which have a tile clad transverse gable. Broadly, the designs are indicative of the late 1920s and display a restrained classicism (pilasters, raised panels, insets, pediments, etc.) and utilise a palette composed of red or clinker brick contrasted by rendered sections.

While the majority of the shopfronts in Miller Street have been modified, original elements survive at:

- no. 129 – recessed entry with tiled lobby, timber-framed half-glazed door, metal shop frame, highlight windows, and
- no. 149 – symmetrical arrangement, metal framing, toplights and awing.

The more distinctive shops are detailed below.

⁸ Review of *Sands & McDougall's Directory*, various editions 1925-30



145-147 Miller Street – large-scale corner building, originally accommodated three shops, including the prominent grocery chain Moran & Cato between the mid-1930s and late 1950s (corner store).⁹ The upper section of the street-facing elevations is highly intact with a stripped back aesthetic including classicising elements (parapeted pediment, mouldings to deeply recessed windows and striking window hoods with modillions) and diamond glazing bars to upper sashes. Of note is the original, wide awning with decorative pressed metal fascia and soffit. The ground floor is intact at either end but the corner section has been altered. Significant



131 Miller Street – visible party walls, louvred dormers, pilasters with corbelled cap and rendered/recessed slots, and cantilevered awnings (some replacement fabric). Contributory



135 Miller Street – exuberant design in the Free Classical style, upper façade is generally intact. Broad, triangular pedimented parapet and flanking pilasters with clinker brick detail. Contributory

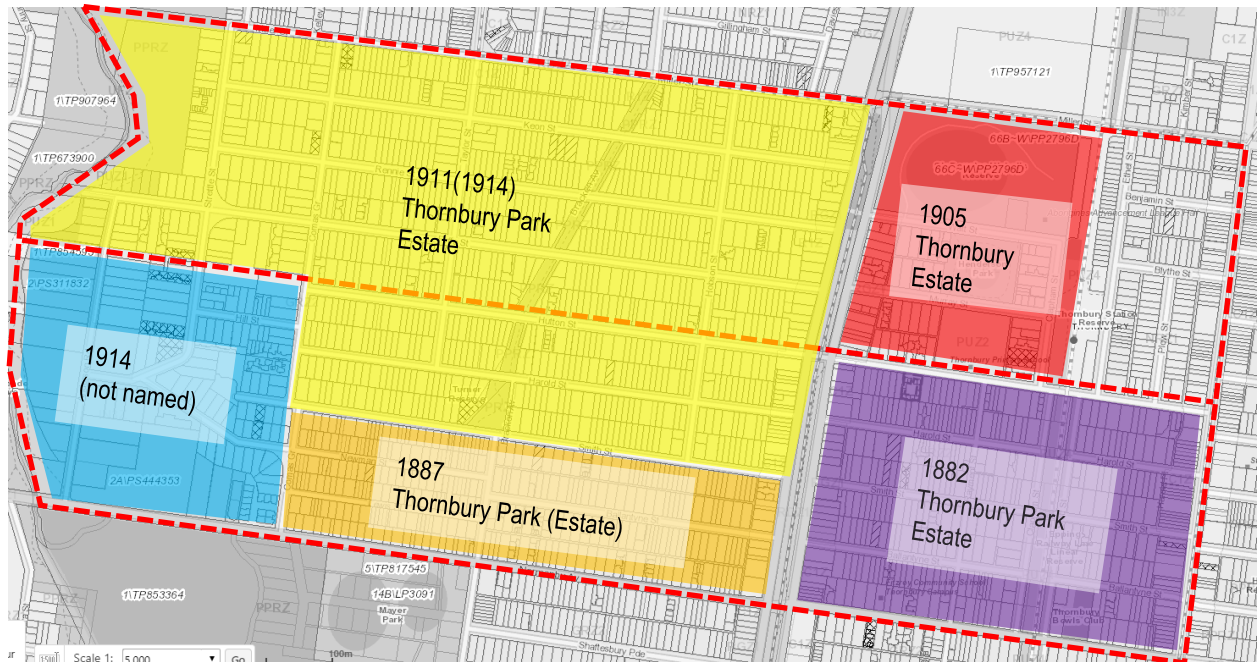
History

Land in the area was surveyed early in Melbourne's post-colonial phase and freehold ownership was made available soon after. This part of Thornbury however remained largely rural until the early 20th century, though some suburban subdivision was undertaken during the 1880s. The Thornbury Park Estate precinct area essentially remained land banked until there were sufficient demand during the early 20th century, facilitated by improvements in the public transport, to warrant further subdivision.

The name of the precinct, 'Thornbury Park', derives from the residence of Job Smith, a key landholder in the area and who had a farmhouse at the west end of what is now Smith Street. This was probably the only development in the precinct area during the

⁹ Review of *Sands & McDougall's Directory*, various editions 1925-60

19th century. The name 'Thornbury Park' was employed in relation to three major subdivisions in this area as outlined on the following map, with the subject one being the last but largest.



Map of area outlining the various Thornbury Park Estates offered for sale during the late 19th and early 20th centuries

The crown allotments are dashed - CA 136 to the north and CA 131 to the south

(Source: LASSI)

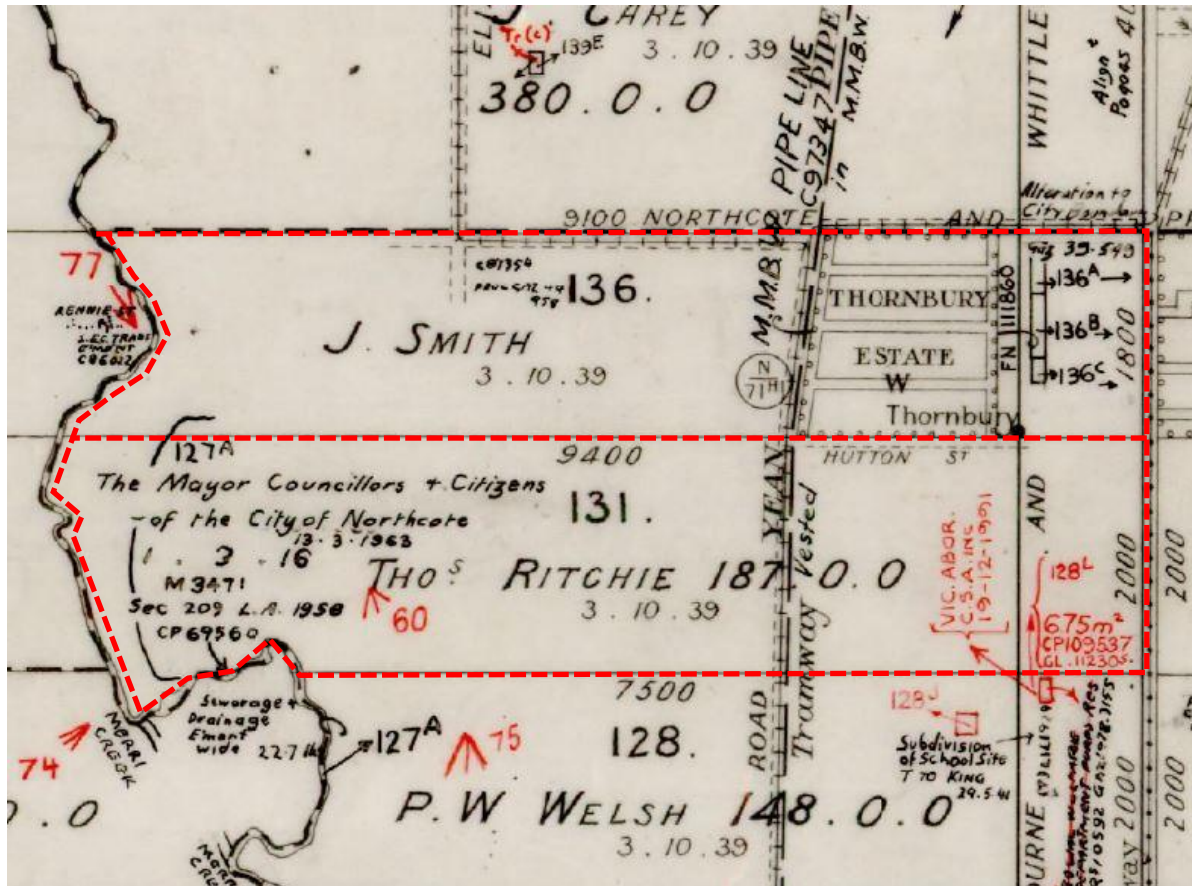
1850s – 1880s

The land in this part of the municipality was originally surveyed by either Robert Hoddle or by William Darke during 1837, on which the Thornbury Park Estate was established. It was assessed as 'good pasture for sheep' and may have been used temporarily as holding ground for stock.¹⁰ As such, narrow farming allotments abutting the two nearby creeks were created to allow broad access to fresh water - Merri Creek in the west and Darebin Creek in the east.¹¹ These lots located at the northern end of what became the City of Northcote, within the Parish of Jika Jika, were much sought after land and fetched high prices in the first Crown sales that began in 1839.¹² The precinct was formed across parts of two large Crown Allotments - 131 (southern end) and 136 (northern end) - which extended from the Merri Creek in the west to Plenty Road (now High Street) in the east.

¹⁰ Andrew Lemon, *The Northcote Side of the River*, Melbourne 1983, pp5-7; Context P/L, *Darebin Heritage Study - Stage 2*, vol.1 (Thematic Environmental History), 2007, p64

¹¹ Context, *Darebin Heritage Study*, vol. 1 (TEH), p64

¹² A Lemon, *The Northcote Side of the River*, p7; Darebin Heritage Study Stage 2, p6



Crown allotments 131 and 136 highlighted
(Source: PROV, Part of the Parish of Jika Jika, J16(5))

The purchasers of original crown lots were often speculators who expected quick turnarounds and large profits from the subdivision of their holdings. Even with the demand generated by the 1850s gold rush, urban settlement (on smaller, more profitable lots) was hampered by the need for farming (and therefore larger, less profitable lots) and a lack of transport links between the Northcote area (including present-day Thornbury) and Melbourne. By June 1840, all of the Crown Allotments in what is now the City of Darebin had been sold.¹³

Crown Allotment 136, which consisted of 182 acres, was first purchased by a J Smith of Melbourne for £668/17/-.¹⁴ It is not clear which Smith this was but it was not Job Smith, who latter had a strong relationship with the site as he was residing in England at that time and was aged 12.¹⁵ It is likely to be a James Smith who had dealings with the adjacent CA 131 during the 1850s.¹⁶ In 1841, there was a James Smith identified as an agent for the Registrar of the Supreme Court and secretary to the Melbourne Fire and Marine Assurance Company.¹⁷

CA136 extended from what is now the south side of Miller Street (north) to the north side of Hutton Street (south). He held most of this land for nearly 50 years and combined it with much of the CA to the south (no. 131).

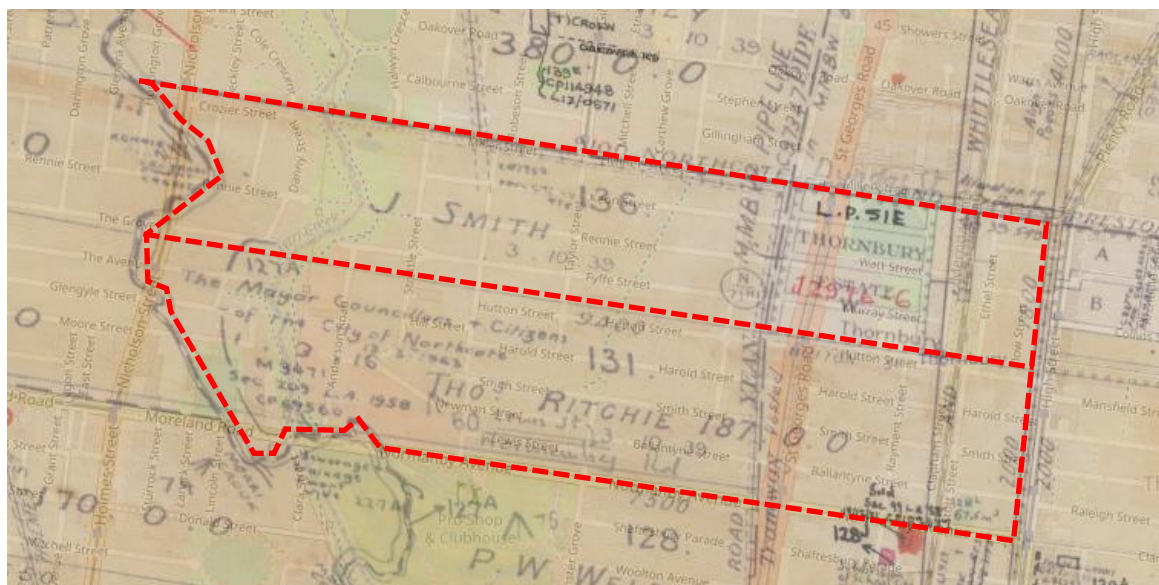
¹³ Darebin Heritage Study, vol. 1, p26

¹⁴ William George Swift, *The History of Northcote, from its settlement to a city*, Melbourne 1927, p5

¹⁵ Census Records, Borough of Leominster, Parish of Leominster, 1841, pp18-19. His father was also Job and his mother was Ann Dynns.

¹⁶ Application File no. 16430 (for conversion of General Law title to Torrens system)

¹⁷ William Kerr (cmpl.), *Kerr's Melbourne Almanac and Port Phillip Directory for 1841*, 1841 [facs. 1978], p253. At that time, there were three Smiths with a first name beginning with 'J' in the directory. The other two were: 'John P' and 'J' only.



Parish plan overlaid over current street configuration
(Source: PROV, map warper)

Thomas Ritchie of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) acquired Crown Allotment 131, which was comprised of 187 acres, for nearly £842.¹⁸ Ritchie's holdings extended from what is now the south side of Hutton Street (north) to Normanby Avenue (south). In 1847, Ritchie came/relocated to Victoria.¹⁹ In the same year, he entered into a seven year lease at a rate of £50 per annum of his 187 acre holdings with William Lilburne, an auctioneer.²⁰ Ritchie, late of Perth, Van Diemen's Land, died on 19 February 1850.²¹

Three years later (1853) John Hunter Patterson acquired CA131 for £4875 and in the following year, he entered into a 7-year lease, which was cancelled in March 1856.²² At this time, he advertised the allotment for lease on which were several buildings, etc. as follows:²³

TO Let, a most desirable Section of 187 Acres, on the Merri Creek, 2½ miles from Melbourne, all substantially fenced and subdivided into two cultivation and one grass paddock, on which is erected a large and commodious dwelling-house, stables, piggeries, &c.; with a large orchard fully stocked with fruit-trees, and a kitchen garden. Application ... to JOHN HUNTER PATTERSON.²⁴

In 1854, James Smith had provided a mortgage to Patterson and they were both recompensed by the acquisition of land for the Yan Yean pipeline in 1856.²⁵ Patterson died in 1859, when he was a sitting member of the Victorian Parliament (MLC), and in his obituary was described as 'one of the oldest and most respected colonists in Victoria.'²⁶ It is not clear when CA131 was subdivided - mostly into 5 and 10 acre allotments with a larger 17 acre allotment on the alluvial flat (west end) but the 17 acre allotment at least was created during the late 1850s, when it was initially leased by both Job and Thomas Smith. A few years later, during 1862, it was acquired by the Smith brothers for £1112, though £572 of this had been paid to J H Patterson 'during his lifetime' (that is before 1859).²⁷

¹⁸ W Swift, *The History of Northcote*, p5

¹⁹ 'Arrived', *Port Phillip Gazette and Settler's Journal*, 31 July 1847, p2

²⁰ General Law title, Application File no. 16430; J J Mourtiz (cml.), *Port Phillip Almanac and Directory for 1847*, Melbourne 1847 [facs. 1979, p106

²¹ PROV, VPRS 7592 [Wills and Probate and Administration Files], P1, unit 3, item A/399

²² General Law title, Application File no. 16430

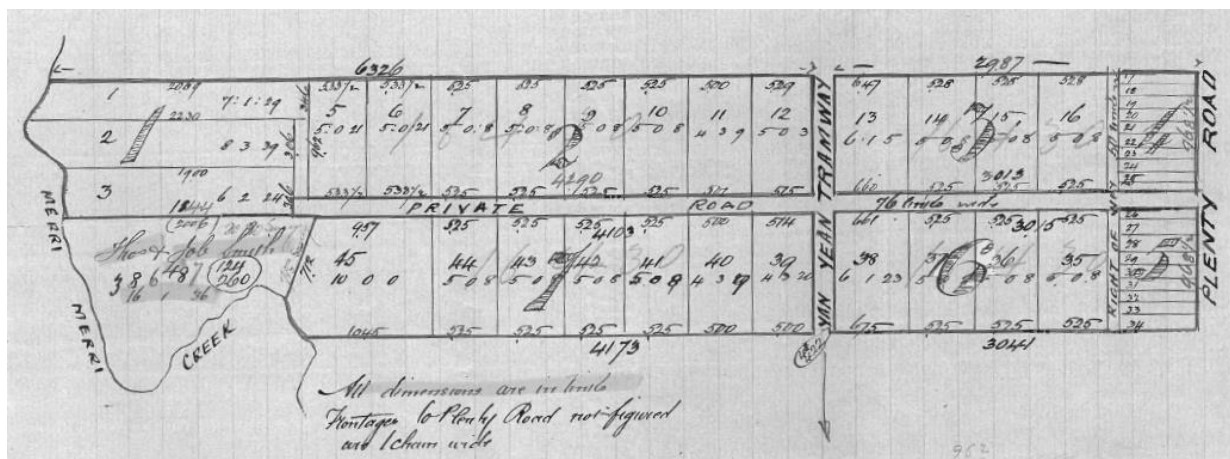
²³ The location of these buildings is unknown but they may be those that Job Smith later inhabited.

²⁴ 'Houses and Land to Let', *Argus*, 1 March 1856, p10

²⁵ General Law title, Application File no. 16430

²⁶ 'Melbourne News', *Bendigo Advertiser*, 28 April 1859, p2

²⁷ General Law title, Application File no. 16430. An alternate version of how Job Smith came to acquire the land, which does not coincide with information in the application file, is provided in W Swift, *The History of Northcote*, pp9-10. Patterson was said to be so dissatisfied with the price paid by Smith that he withdrew the remaining 170 acres from sale. Smith subsequently leased this part on which bullock teams would camp, whom Patterson sold it to in 1854 after the economic downturn at a considerable loss for £2,737.



Original subdivision of CA131

The private road broadly corresponds with the current location of Smith street

(Source: Application File no. 16430)

Job Smith acquired the other 44 allotments of CA 131 in his own right during 1877.²⁸ With this purchase, Smith came to be in possession of a vast tract of land (CA 131 + 136), which he named 'Thornbury' after a farm in his birthplace of Hertfordshire, England.²⁹

Job Smith was born on 4 November 1828 in England at Leominster, Hertfordshire.³⁰ Smith was a founder and long standing leading member of the Royal Agricultural Society, who had arrived in Australia in 1852, at the age of about 24. He died at his home in Kew, nearly 90 years of age and was said to have been responsible for 'the introduction of a number of grasses and fodders that are now in general use in this State'.³¹ It is not clear when Job Smith and/or his brother Thomas, a stone mason,³² came to Melbourne.³³ Listings for the Northcote/Preston area were first included in the Sands & McDougall's directories from 1865, when a J F Smith was listed in Preston.³⁴ By 1867, he was definitely residing in the area as Job Smith, farmer, Preston was identified. Thomas Smith, mason was also listed for South Preston.³⁵ By 1872, the suburb was being defined as Northcote and in 1875, the listing was for Merri Creek, Northcote.³⁶ In 1880, his address was High Street, Northcote.³⁷

At some stage during the mid to late 19th century, a brick farm house was occupied by Job Smith at the west end of what is now Smith Street, known as 'Thornbury (Park)', which may have been the one noted in the previously noted 1853 advertisement. The inference in an 1886 description of the house was that Smith had lived there for some time, thus making a circa 1860s date not unlikely:

till lately the residence of Mr Job Smith, was also inspected, the general opinion being that it was never built to be sold, as the solidity of the walls, the loftiness of the rooms, and the various details of comfort and decoration are such as are only as indulged in when a permanent house is contemplated.³⁸

The majority of Smith's land west of St Georges Road was retained as a farm during the late 19th century.³⁹ Described as being 'fenced with stringy bark rails and redgum posts', with about 30 acres of fertile meadow land on the west side of the estate along

²⁸ General Law title, Application File no. 16430

²⁹ 'How Thornbury Got Its Name', *Northcote Leader*, 7 September 1918, p3

³⁰ Boroondara Cemetery, Wesleyan 'A' section, grave no. 830 - headstone

³¹ 'Death of Mr Job Smith', *Weekly Times*, 14 September 1918, p54. Births, Deaths, Marriages Victoria, registration no. 9386/1918, his mother was Ann Dyns and his father was also Job Smith.

³² Thomas Smith was identified as a stone mason in some newspapers during the 1870s such as 'Facts, Fancy and Fun', *Record and Emerald Hill and Sandridge Advertiser*, 3 September 1875, p4

³³ They do not seem to be listed in the various 1850s Melbourne directories: Butterfield of 1854, Tanner of 1857, or Sands & Kenny (late 1850s)

³⁴ Sands & McDougall's directory, 1865, p352

³⁵ Sands & McDougall's directory, 1867, pp414-415

³⁶ Sands & McDougall's directories, 1872, p621; 1875, p700

³⁷ Sands & McDougall's directory, 1880, p652

³⁸ 'Job Smiths Estate', *Fitzroy City Press*, 20 March 1886, p3

³⁹ Although the substantive part of Smith's estate west of St Georges Road was held out of subdivision, the south side of Smith Street between Leicester Street and Comas Grove was included in a mid-1880s boom period subdivision; 1884, The Thornbury Park estate, Vale Collection, SLV

the Merri Creek, used to produce fodder for the cattle. Further from the creek, three small cultivation paddocks of about 12 acres each were utilised in the production of hay. Smith owned a herd of about 80 cattle, 40 of which were in milk at any one time, and calves were sold to the butchers when a few days old. Smith nourished his soil with the sanguineous by-products of the nearby piggeries/tanneries, and employed three men. Smith's home, 'Thornbury Park', was a 'well built commodious brick homestead, overlooking a romantic locality' and surrounded by a fruit and flower garden,⁴⁰ 'picturesquely situated on the banks of the Merri Merri', 'charming' and 'with such varied scenery being so close to Melbourne' (following).⁴¹



Job Smith's farmhouse, originally known as *Thornbury (Park)*, later *Merri Bank*, at what is now the west end of Smith Street, nd
(Source: Darebin Heritage website)



Job Smith
(Source: *Weekly Times*, 14 September 1918, p54)

Other contemporary articles also provide considerable description of the land and Smith's farming activities and other farms in the area, in addition to trialling of equipment, etc. that was undertaken on his farm as outlined in the following excerpts:

The farm visited is that owned and managed by Mr. Job Smith, situated on the west of the Plenty-road, at Northcote, about 5 miles north-east of Melbourne, and contains 167 acres, the majority of which is grey ... loam. It is well fenced with stringy bark rails and redgum posts, and, tolerably well subdivided. There are, about 30 acres of meadow land on the west side along the edge of the Merri Creek, the soil being black and exceedingly fertile, reaching a depth of 5 feet. This piece is devoted to the production of fodder for the cattle, such as mangels, barley, vetches and carrots, and is protected from inundation by a dyke or mound of earth, made at the expense of much time and labor, half a mile in length, about 5 feet in height, and having a good broad base. ...

On the uplands also are three small cultivation paddocks, containing about 12 acres each, which are utilised in the production of hay. The soil is a sandy loam, about 10 inches in depth, but much inferior to the land bordering the creek....

The principal portion of the pasture land has, however, never been broken up; but considering the success that has attended Mr. Smith's efforts in the way of raising artificial grasses so far, there is no doubt it would pay him to extend operations in this line to the whole of his grazing land.... The herd, which numbers altogether about eighty, consists of Ayrshires, Alderneys and, crossbreds; about forty being the number ordinarily in milk.⁴²

The farms in this district are small, from 5 to 200 acres, are mostly in the hands of freeholders, and are well cultivated and fenced. The hay harvest has been a very protracted and expensive one, owing to the continued showery weather, also labor has been scarce and dear, and of a very inferior quality, not one man in six that go about as harvest hands can put up a cock of hay, which is the cause of great loss and annoyance to farmers. — Job Smith, *Thornbury Park*, Northcote.⁴³

⁴⁰ *Leader (Melbourne)*, 10 June 1882, p6

⁴¹ 'Job Smiths Estate', *Fitzroy City Press*, 20 March 1886, p3

⁴² 'Thornbury Park Farm', *Leader*, 10 June 1882, p6

⁴³ 'Bourke', *Leader*, 25 February 1882, p8

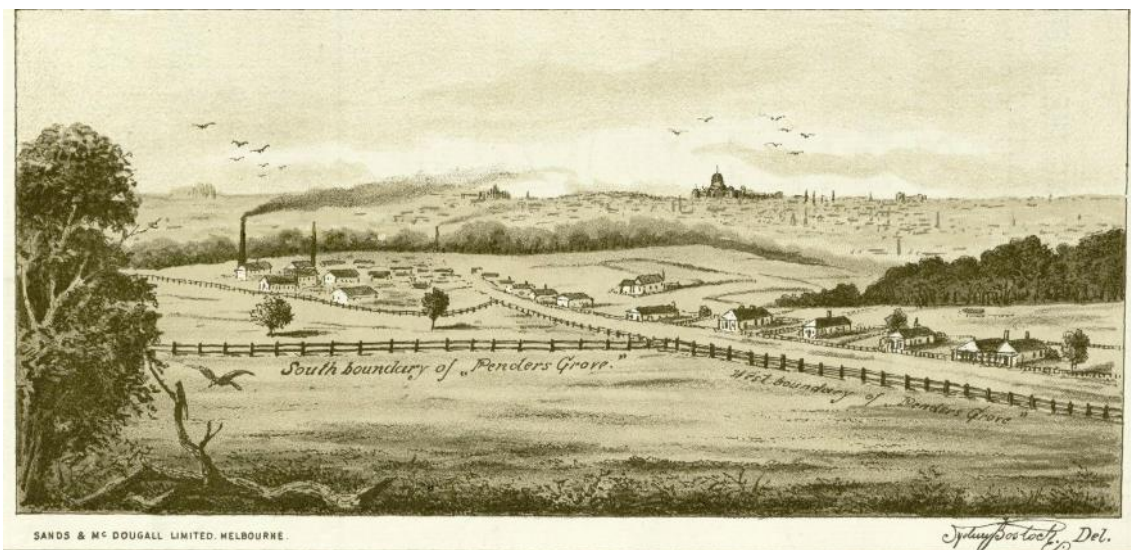
A public trial of a recently-imported twine-binding reaper, from Messrs. Samuelson and Co.'s Britannia works, Banbury, England, took place yesterday, at Thornbury Park, the farm of Mr. Job Smith, near Northcote. The trial was held under the auspices of Messrs. Samuelson's Victorian agents, Messrs. T. Robinson and Co., and the result has to be described as highly satisfactory.⁴⁴

In 1883, Job Smith's holdings were said to be 135 acres.⁴⁵ Another house of unknown date was said to have been located north of Smith's house near Comas Grove, which was known for some time referred to as Captain Hutton's place. It was a basalt building though there were outbuildings including milking shed near Keon Street and cattle yards on the flat near the creek.⁴⁶

1880s - Early Subdivision in the Area

Subdivision tentatively commenced during the 1880s in the west part of Thornbury, part of the metropolis-wide land boom. In about 1880, Smith sold the eastern section of Crown Allotment 131 between St Georges Road and High Street for £12,000.⁴⁷ This land was the first suburban subdivision being offered for sale as the 'Thornbury Park Estate' and commenced during 1882.⁴⁸ The advertising was geared towards families living in crowded inner-city areas, providing them with the opportunity to secure a country lifestyle.⁴⁹ Subdivision in the Northcote and Thornbury areas was facilitated by the construction of a bridge over the Merri Creek on St Georges Road in August 1886, which provided an immediate improvement in travel times and demand for housing north of the bridge. To keep up with this development Railways were laid across the city.⁵⁰ Northcote and Preston did not receive a direct route to Melbourne at this time, as the 'Northcote Loop Line' opened in did not provide a direct service to the city terminating in the inner suburbs instead.⁵¹

Despite the early subdivisions and the opening of the railway line, much of Thornbury and the north part of Northcote remained rural in character, as demonstrated on the below illustration of the area from 1885 (St Georges Road is to the right). Due to the limited development and its location on the outskirts of the urban area, the Northcote area was regarded as an appropriate site for the location of institutions that required isolation, asylums and hospitals, etc. For similar reasons noxious industries developed in the area during this time, including piggeries, tanneries and boiling works.⁵² When offered for sale in 1886, the remaining part of CA131 was seen as opportune for a benevolent Asylum or the like.⁵³



'Pender Grove, Looking Southerly' (1885)

Showing the semi-rural environs of the Thornbury area looking south towards the city Pender Grove was to the east of High Street

⁴⁴ 'Samuelson's Reaper and Binder', Age, 6 January 1882, p3

⁴⁵ Northcote Rate Book, 1883, entry no. 122, This is the first readily available

⁴⁶ W Swift *The History of Northcote*, p10

⁴⁷ W Swift *The History of Northcote*, p10

⁴⁸ 1882 Thornbury Park Estate, Northcote [cartographic material], building allotments (Vale SLV 1882). From north to south, this subdivision included Hutton, Harold, Smith, Ballantyne and Normanby streets; *Mercury and Weekly Courier*, 16 September 1882, p2

⁴⁹ A Lemon, *Northcote Side of the River*, p90

⁵⁰ Michell Summerton and Allom Lovell & Associates, *Darebin An Environmental History*, p23

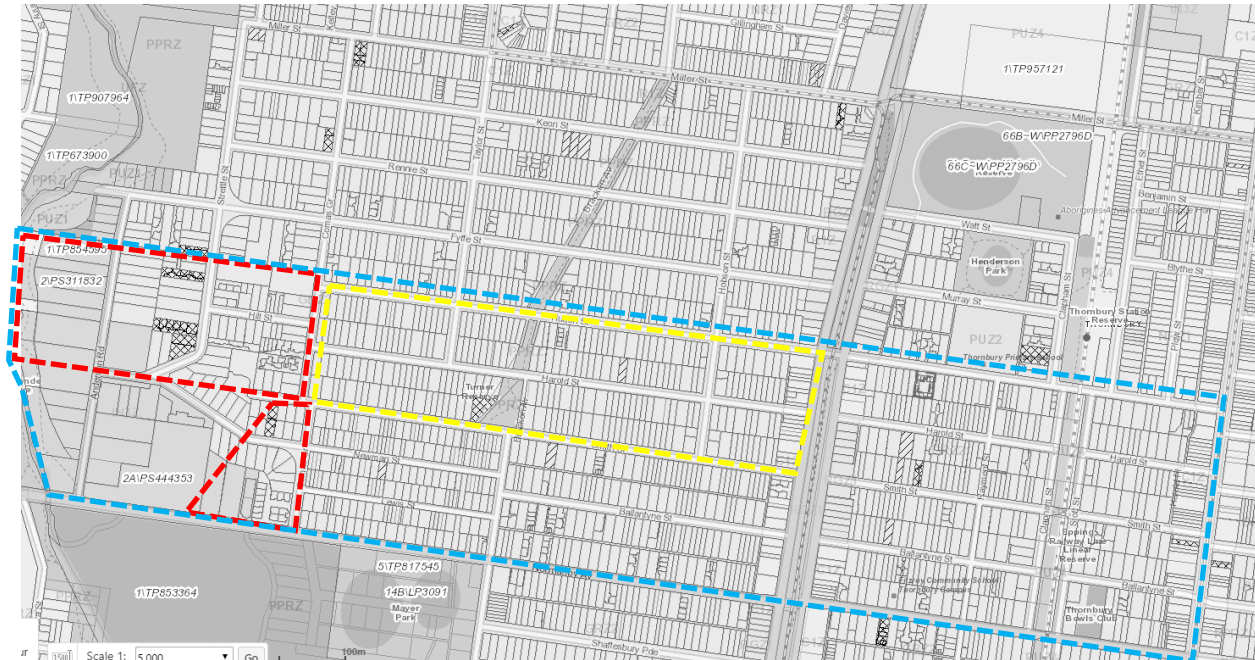
⁵¹ Vicsig, Thornbury, <http://vicsig.net/infrastructure/location/Thornbury>,

⁵² *Northcote*, eMelbourne, Andrew May

⁵³ 'Job Smiths Estate', *Fitzroy City Press*, 20 March 1886, p3

(Source: SLV, Vale collection, va001334-002)

The next section that Job Smith divested himself was that immediately south of the subject precinct, being from the south side of Smith Street and to the north side of Normanby Avenue (between Comas Grove and St Georges Road).⁵⁴ This subdivision was referred to as Thornbury Park initially,⁵⁵ but later also as Thornbury Park Estate.⁵⁶



Map showing the breaking up of the western section CA 131 (Blue)

Red – Trustees Executors and Agency Co

Yellow - Australian and British Land Deposit Agency

(Source: LASSI)

The remaining parts of Job Smith's holdings in CA 131 west of St Georges Road (to Merri Creek) were sold in two large parcels at this time.

- In 1887, most of the western part (west of Comas Grove) comprising over 28 acres was acquired by Samuel Lyons.⁵⁷ Three years later (1890) it was transferred to Robert Gray Ford, who died in 1891. Henceforth it was managed by the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. as his executor until 1914.⁵⁸ The Trustees and Executors and Agency Co was established in 1878 by William Templeton, a noted public servant and company director,⁵⁹ when 'he perceived a need for wealthy or moderately wealthy people to have a good executor'.⁶⁰ In 1914, the land temporarily becomes part of Hugh Anderson's holdings on 29 May 1914, as it was immediately transferred to the Thornbury Park P/L as part of their consolidated holdings.⁶¹

⁵⁴ Certificate of Title, vol. 1450, folio 825. It was purchased by John Christopher

⁵⁵ SLV, 'Thornbury Park', Vale collection, va000201, possibly 1886, shows standard allotment sized between Comas (Merri Vale Grove) and Leinster Grove

⁵⁶ SLV, '50 Allotments (famous Thornbury Park Estate)', va000172, for land in Ballantyne and Normanby streets between St Georges Road and Leinster Grove. A 4-digit telephone number was provided on the advertisement meaning it could date from the 1890s to about the 1920s.

⁵⁷ Certificate of Title, vol. 1963, folio 427

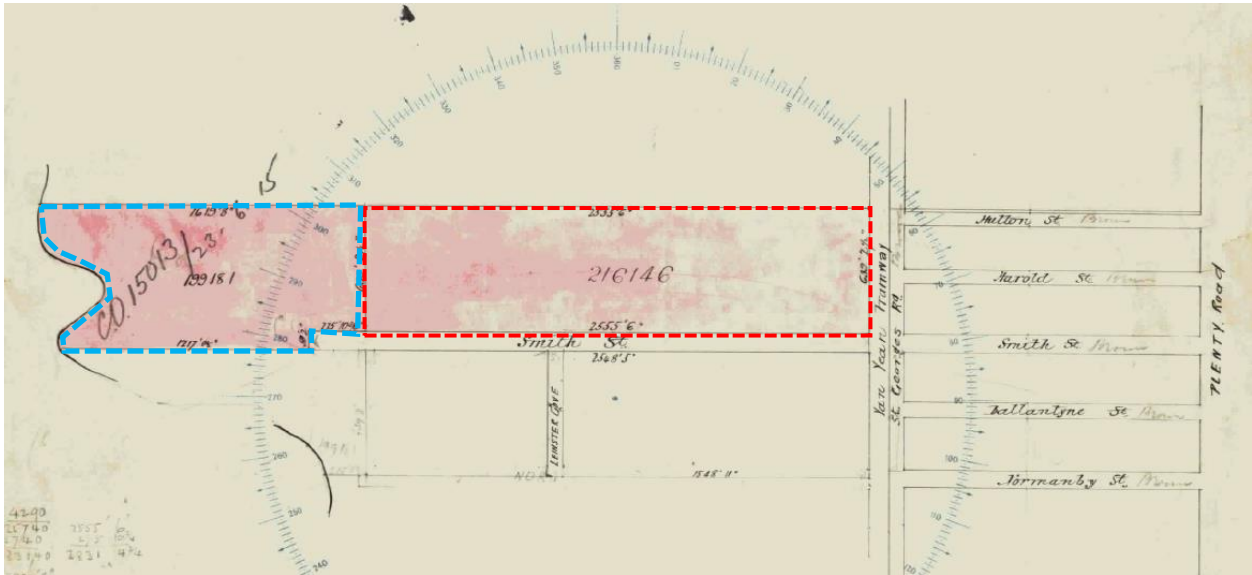
⁵⁸ Certificate of Title, vol. 2311, folio 035

⁵⁹ Jacqueline Templeton, 'Templeton, William (1828–1890)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, Canberra, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/templeton-william-4698/text7783>, 1976, accessed 2 March 2020

⁶⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trustees_Executors_and_Agency_Company, accessed 2 March 2020. The TEA folded in 1983 after becoming involved in some bad property deals.

⁶¹ Certificate of Title, vol. 3812, folio 384

- In 1888, the east part (north of Smith Street)⁶² was sold to Walter Scott and James King.⁶³ This 37.5 acres holding was acquired by the Australian and British Land Deposit Agency in January 1891.⁶⁴



Late 19th century holdings in the northern part of CA 131 within the precinct, between Hutton and Smith streets
 The section east of Comas Grove (red) was acquired by the Australian and British Land Deposit Agency (and soon after the CBA)
 The western section (blue) was acquired by the Trustees Executors and Agency Co.
 (Source: Certificate of Title, vol. 1450, folio 824)

The year prior (1890), the aforementioned Australian and British Land Deposit Agency had acquired the northern part of the subject precinct, that is all the land west of St Georges Road in CA136 being some 140 acres. A mortgage was taken out with the Commercial Bank of Australia in 1892. The Australian and British Land Deposit Agency was greatly indebted to the Commercial Bank and went into liquidation.⁶⁵ The company was wound up in 1894 and struck from the register of companies in 1903.⁶⁶

Subdivision of the northern part of the precinct – north of Hutton in CA 136 – seems to have been contemplated (but seemingly never realised), possibly in 1891, according to a contemporary plan (below) of the area. It shows a different street names (for instance, Blyth Street instead of Harold Street) and different configuration, with suburban lots extending to Merri Creek.

⁶² This section was bound by Hutton Street (north), St George Road (east), Smith Street (south) and Comas Grove (west).

⁶³ Certificate of Title, vol. 1450, folio 824

⁶⁴ Certificate of Title, vol. 2328, folio 428

⁶⁵ 'Land Boom Recalled', *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 19 June 1909, p13

⁶⁶ 'Bent Land Commission', *Age*, 19 June 1909, p14



'Plan of Town of Northcote', (possibly compiled 1891, revised 1906) prepared by G B Blake
(Source: SLV, vc000492-001)

Early 20th Century

The land boom soon ended in catastrophic crash in the 1890s when, in general, Victoria was 'miserably depressed', and Melbourne's suburbs were particularly hard hit.⁶⁷ No further attempts at subdivision west of St Georges Road occurred for about 20 years and the land remained largely undeveloped, though a portion of Smith's former farm west of Comas Grove continued operating under the McNamara family, who possibly resided in his farmhouse.⁶⁸

It was not until 1905 that there was any interest/demand for suburban development in the area. In that year, a smaller subdivision adjacent to the subject one was undertaken after the Commercial Bank of Australia (part of the former Australian and British Land Deposit Agency holdings which the bank had acquired by default) sold the portion of CA 136 east of St Georges Road, as far as the railway, to the Board of Works (MMBW), that is the Victorian Government.⁶⁹ This 30 acre parcel of land was proposed to be largely used for the state brick works, in conjunction with some housing. By 1908, the proposal for the land had been largely reversed as a greater proportion was being mooted for residential development (20 acres), with only 10 acres reserved for the brick works.⁷⁰ The plans for the subdivision, known as the Thornbury Estate, showed 'the land cut up into attractive-looking residential allotments, intersected by a number of wide streets'.⁷¹

MMBW plans (below) of this part of Thornbury were prepared just prior to subdivision in the precinct area showing how it was undeveloped except for 'Merri Bank' (Smith's former farmhouse) near the west end of Smith Street.⁷² It shows that minimal construction had occurred on the south side of Smith Street, and adjacent streets to the south, which were part of an 1886 subdivision. The creek/watercourse, now Bracken Avenue, is also evident.

⁶⁷ Geoffrey Blainey, *A History of Victoria*, 2nd ed., Melbourne 2013, p158

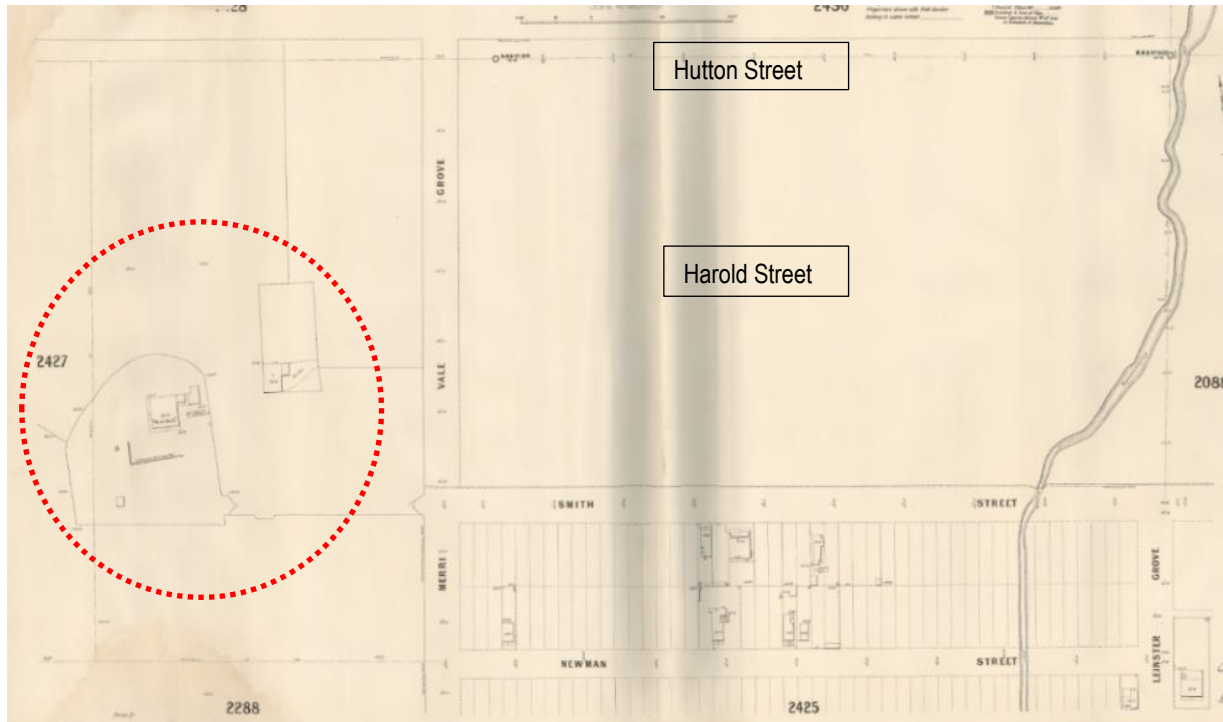
⁶⁸ Northcote Rate Books, 1900, entry 5098. In 1900, Thomas McNamara, grazier, is identified and the NAV was only £16, suggesting the holdings/buildings were of a modest scale.

⁶⁹ Certificate of Title, vol. 2331, folio 047

⁷⁰ *Herald*, 13 January 1908, p3

⁷¹ *Weekly Times*, 18 January 1908, p40

⁷² MMBW detail plans (held at SLV): no. 2008 (1910), no. 2426 (1910), and no. 2432 (1909). The early version of no. 2431 is not available.



1910, MMBW detail plan 2426

South-western part of the precinct area showing earlier subdivision to the south side of Smith Street with Smith's former farmhouse, then known as *Merri Bank*, and stables evident (dashed). The approximate location of Harold and Hutton streets is indicated.

(Source: SLV)

Thornbury Park Estate

The subdivision of the Thornbury Park Estate was part of a pattern across Northcote, which saw suburban subdivisions in response to the broader economic recovery from the effects of the 1890s depression.⁷³ The recovery was prompted by the extension of the southern terminus of the Heidelberg line from Collingwood to Melbourne in 1901, which providing the town with a direct rail link to the city.⁷⁴ This was the final phase of subdivision in Northcote and by 1919 scarcely any part of Thornbury had been left unsubdivided.⁷⁵

Although the land of the Thornbury Park Estate was still held by two corporate agencies – the Commercial Bank of Australia (CBA) and the Trustees Executors and Agency Co. (TEA) – in 1911 (as certificates of title were not issued until 1914), the subdivision was being advertised from November of that year.

The effect of the duplication and forthcoming sale of the estate was highlighted in the following article:

Messrs Nicol Miller and Co. auctioneers and estate agents report business brisk all round since the duplication of the railway line and the building of new railway stations. There is a service of 70 trains a day. The district also enjoys the advantage of a cable tram service at intervals of five minutes. The Northcote and Preston Councils have just decided to install electric lighting service. It is also proposed to construct an electric tram from Brunswick street. Fitzroy, along St. George's road to the Preston reservoir. This, it is fully expected, will cause a great deal of settlement along the route.

In order to meet the large demand for building purposes Messrs Nicol, Miller and Co. have sold to a company 150 acres, the pick of the picturesque Thornbury Park Estate, and are holding on December 16 next a big sale of 600 choice allotments in the vicinity of the Thornbury railway station, on especially easy terms, to bring the lots within the reach of anyone seeking a home. The making of roads and streets is in progress. The return fare to these convenient allotments is only four pence halfpenny.⁷⁶

⁷³ Context, *Darebin Heritage Study*, vol.1 (TEH), p31

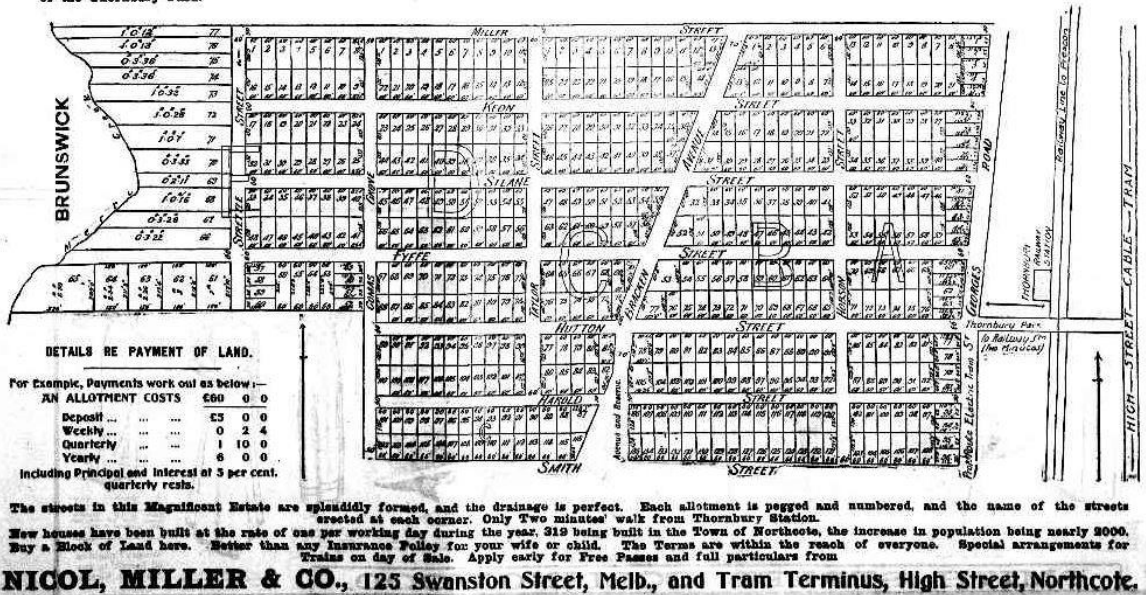
⁷⁴ Context, *Darebin Heritage Study*, vol. 1 (TEH), p36

⁷⁵ *Herald*, 14 August 1919, p12

⁷⁶ 'Northcote District', *Herald*, 16 November 1911, p3

GREAT SUB-DIVISIONAL SALE BY AUCTION, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, **AT THREE O'CLOCK, ON THE GROUND.** **THORNBURY PARK ESTATE, NORTHCOTE.**

NICOL, MILLER & CO. have received instructions from the owners to sell as above: 600 Magnificent Villa and Shop Sites, and about 15 acres of the Richest River Flats within 20 miles of Melbourne. To be sold in areas to suit buyers. Luncheon provided.
 The Phenomenal Progress of NORTHCOTE in recent years has been unique. The Value of Estate Property has increased by £11,170 within the last year.
 72 Trains per day; 4½ return to Prince's Bridge. Five minute Cable Tram Service from Bourke Street, Melbourne, to Thornbury. Electric Tram Service is now being considered by the North Fitzroy, Northcote and Preston Councils. the proposed route to Preston is via St. George's Road along the Eastern Boundary of the Thornbury Park.



1911 sales notice of the estate

(Source: *Herald*, 14 December 1911, p3)

Contemporary confusion with nomenclature continued and it seems any subdivision in Job Smith's former holdings in CA 131 + 136 would be referred to as the Thornbury Park Estate. For instance, 50 allotments further east near High street was also being offered as such during March 1911.⁷⁷

A plan of the subject Thornbury Park Estate was provided in December 1911 prior to the auction on the 16th of that month and consisted of 600 villa sites the vast majority of which were 66 lots fronting seven east-west orientated streets. There were also deeper allotments that fronted the creek to the west side Strettle Street.⁷⁸ John W M Comas (and presumably how the street/grove acquired its name) was noted as the solicitor responsible for issuing the titles.⁷⁹

Special arrangements were offered with builders Dunlop and Hunt, who were available to erect villas to prearranged designs if required. Established in 1894, Dunlop and Hunt were a prolific firm of builders and contractors known were prolific particularly known for the competent design and construction of bungalow types in the suburbs of Melbourne during the Interwar period.⁸⁰ They prepared catalogues of a variety of house designs – from "pretty compact villas" to 'large and handsome residences'.⁸¹ These types of building companies provided finance at relatively low rates and were crucial to providing an opportunity for the lower and middle socio-economic classes to attain the suburban ideal of home ownership. Dunlop and Hunt prided themselves on providing a high-quality product that was well designed, with architects involved, at every level due to the following:

To have the erection of buildings properly supervised by foremen, some of whom have been employed by the firm for the last nine years, and whose special duty it is to see that only the highest class materials are used and the best workmanship put in. This rule applies to the four-roomed cottage equally with the residence costing 1000 or over.

⁷⁷ Age, 25 March 1911, p3. Land was available in Benjamin, Blyth, Boundary, Ethel streets etc.

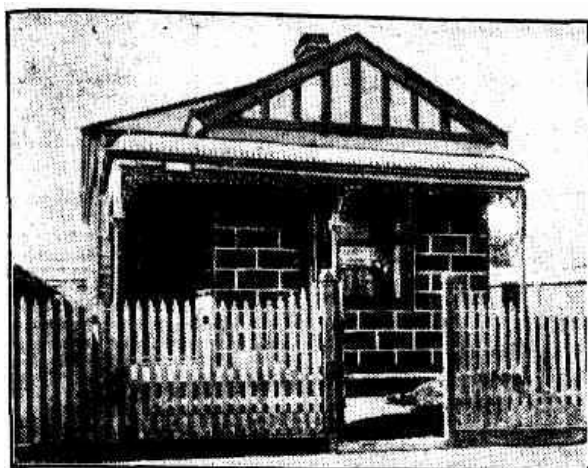
⁷⁸ *Herald*, 7 December 1911, p3

⁷⁹ Age, 16 December 1911, p2

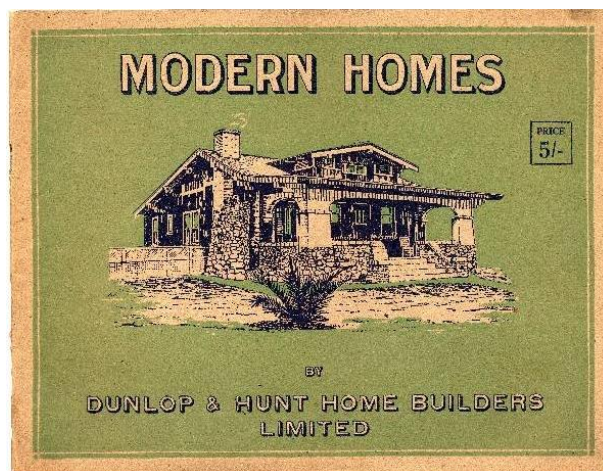
⁸⁰ *Advance Australia*, Vol 16, No 1 (9 January 1912), p3; VHD, Citation for Shops 15 – 27 Glen Eira Road and 2 – 6 Glen Eira Avenue, St Kilda East

⁸¹ An example of the front cover of one of Dunlop and Hunts Home Builders Ltd catalogue is available at <https://www3.monash.edu/library/collections/exhibitions/home/virtual/photos/photo5.html>, (accessed 23.04.2020). According to the bungalow depicted, it likely dates to the 1920s.

In addition to this, every building is under the supervision of some well-known Melbourne architect. In a great many cases clients appoint their own architects and are invited to do so if they wish. The firm also goes to considerable expense to secure originality of designs, and possesses over 700 plans, costing several thousands of pounds, applicable to every character of building.⁸²



Example of a Dunlop & Hunt cottage, early 1910s
(Source: *Herald*, 7 May 1914, p5)



Example of a circa 1920s catalogue of Dunlop & Hunt
(Source: Monash Library
<https://www3.monash.edu/library/collections/exhibitions/home/virtual/photos/photo5.html>)

In February 1912, the auctioneers and estate agents, Messers Nicol Miller and Co. reported the initial sales in the estate were successful and that water mains were about to be laid in the precinct:

Thornbury Park Estate; allotments in this estate have sold beyond expectations. Arrangements are now being made with the Metropolitan Board of Works for laying water mains through the estate, which will be completed shortly. New houses are now building in every street, since the auction sale in December 160ft to Hutton street have been sold for £1187; 769ft. St. Georges road. £987: 159ft, Comas Grove. £240; 180ft. Fyffe street, £171; 240ft. Strettle street. £175/10/; 200ft to Harold street, £190/10/; 160ft. Keon street. £126.⁸³

Sales in the estate were steady over the next few years with 53 of the 74 allotments put to auction on 27 April 1912 sold.⁸⁴ In May 1912, the agents noted that 'villas and land' were being offered at Harold and Hutton streets and Comas Grove.⁸⁵ The auctioneers subsequently offered 'the residue of allotments' on 5 October 1912 with 'fully 250 people assembled in the large marquee', 'notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather'. 'Total sales by auction and privately, £2392. Inquiries are coming in very freely for the remaining blocks'.⁸⁶

During November 1913, a further 78 allotments in the estate were offered for sale, promoted as being 'well situated, being within four minutes' walk of Thornbury Railway Station, and the proposed Electric Tramway from Fitzroy to Preston',⁸⁷ as 'the Remarkable Progress of Northcote Continues, and These Lots Comprise Some of the Best Building Sites in the District'.⁸⁸

Thornbury Park P/L were identified on the titles as of 29 May 1914, being divested directly from the CBA and indirectly from the TEA by the intermediary of Hugh Anderson, gentleman of Tooronga House, Tooronga Road, Hawthorn.⁸⁹ There are few references to the Thornbury Park P/L in contemporary newspapers with the earliest being in October 1913. J V M Wood was identified as the secretary.⁹⁰

⁸² 'Operation of Easy Payment System', *Herald*, 7 May 1914, p5

⁸³ 'Land and Allotments', *The Herald*, 15 February 1912, p3

⁸⁴ 'Thornbury Park', *Herald*, 2 May 1912, p3

⁸⁵ 'Abstract of Sales by Auction', *Age*, 25 May 1912, p2

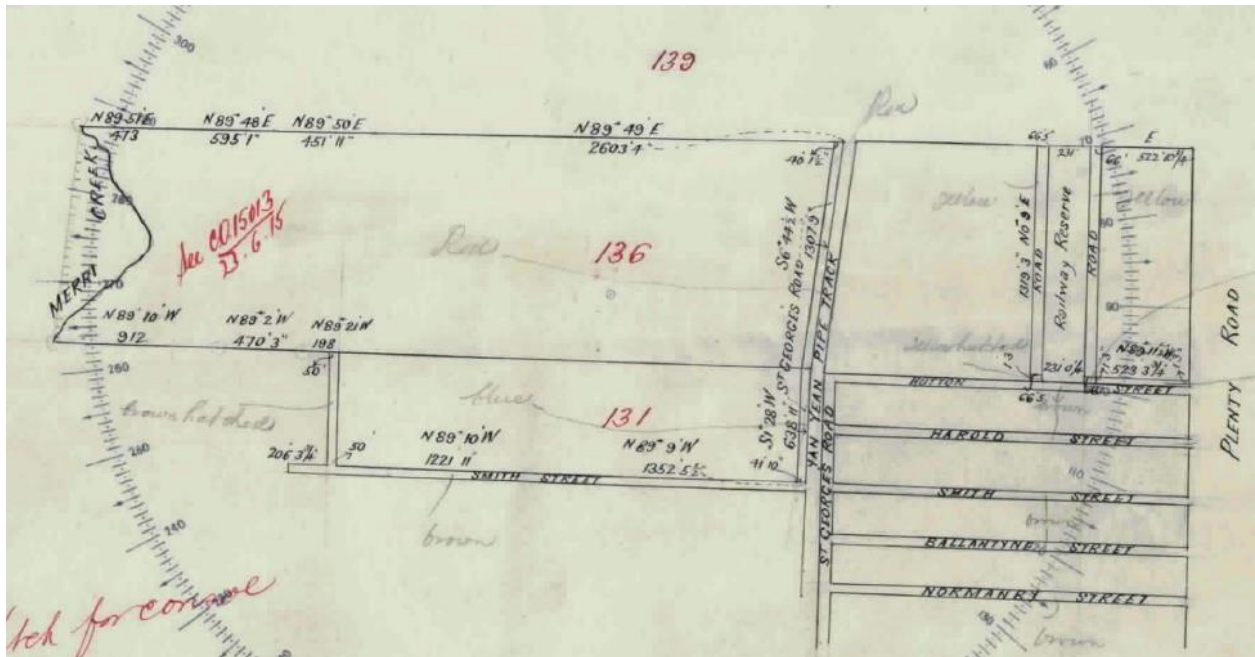
⁸⁶ 'Thornbury Park Estate', *Herald*, 10 October 1912, p3

⁸⁷ 'Thornbury Park', *Herald*, 13 November 1913, p5

⁸⁸ *Argus*, 22 October 1913, p2

⁸⁹ Certificate of Title, vol. 3814, folio 601

⁹⁰ 'Sales by Auction', *Age*, 11 October 1913, p11

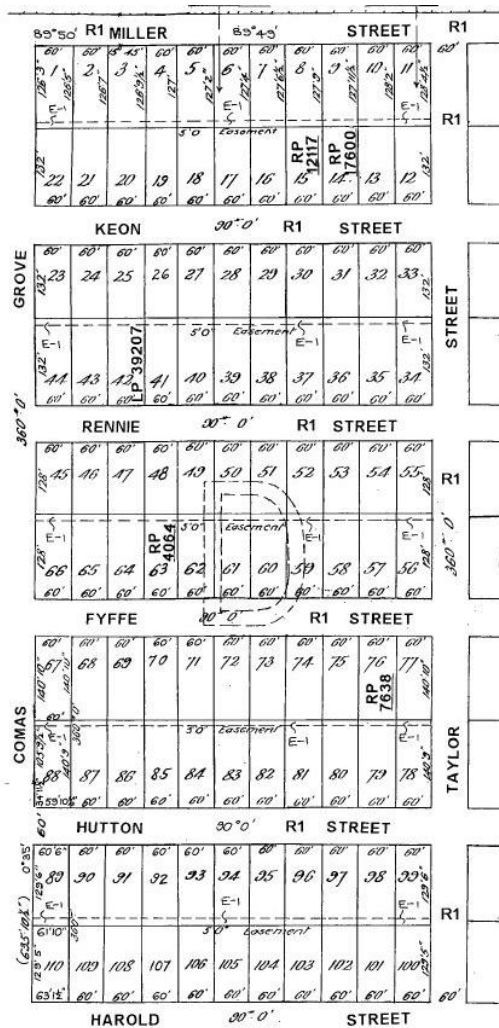


Consolidation plan, showing the parts of the Thornbury Park Estate in relation to CA 131 + 136
(Source: Certificate of Title, vol. 2311, folio 035)

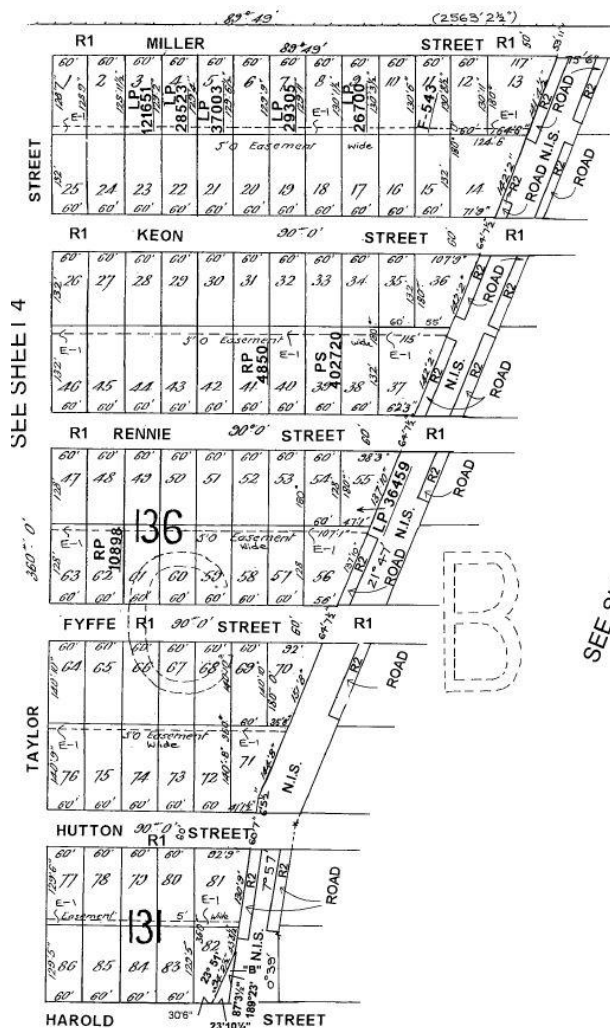
According to the subdivision plan LP6434, which encompasses most of the precinct, it could officially be lodged on 10 August 1914. The first titles were issued on 16 September 1914.⁹¹ Given the size of the subdivision, it was recorded over seven sheets, the eastern most two of which are reproduced below. It coincides with the configuration released in late 1911 sales notice (refer above). The lot numbers started again in each section (A to E), and ranged between 77 and 135.

91

Certificates of Title, vol. 2331, folio 047 and vol. 3814, folio 601

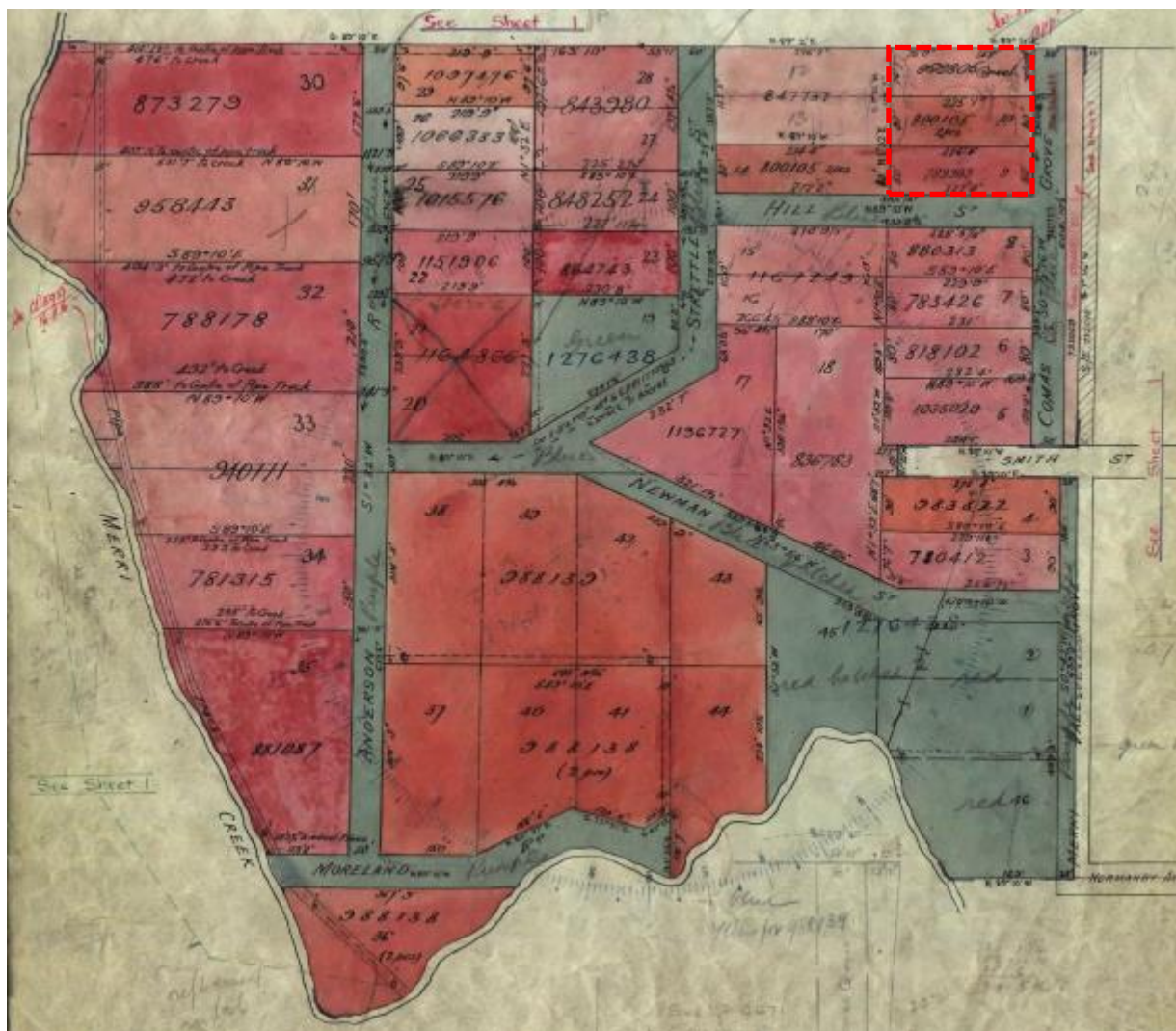


Section D - east end of subdivision between Comas Grove and Taylor Street
(Source: LP6434, sheet 4)



Section C - middle portion of subdivision between Taylor Street and Bracken Avenue
(Source: LP6434, sheet 5)

Land on the western side of Comas Grove was part of a separate subdivision, LP6671, also undertaken in 1914. Hugh Anderson held the land from 29 May 1914 and lots were gradually released from mid-1915, with the relevant parcels being acquired by mid-1924. This subdivision does not seem to have been marketed as a particular estate.

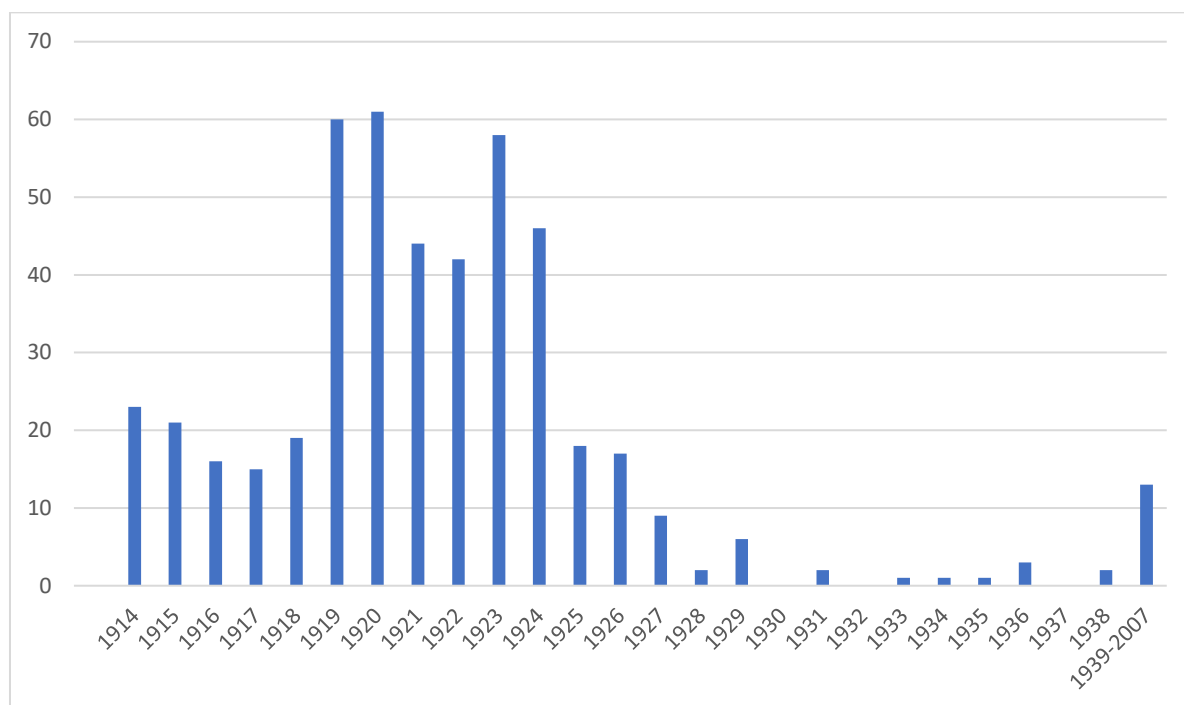


Section within precinct highlighted
(Source: Certificate of title, vol. 3812, folio 384)

The following graph summarises the issuing of the titles of the original 600 allotments (generally 60 feet or 18.3 metres wide) in the main subdivision, many of which have been further subdivided. The first titles were issued in 1914, about two years after the first allotments were sold. For the original 600 allotments, there were only about 480 individual sales as some purchasers bought more than one allotment. Nearly a third of the sales occurred (154) during the 1910s. Over the next five years (1920-24) much of the land had been sold (405), with nearly all the land being sold by the end of the 1920s. An equal, but small, number of sales occurred during the 1930s and 1940s (10 each).⁹²

⁹²

Refer to above graph of land sales; Certificate of Title, vol. 3814, folio 601



Issuing of titles (sales) of the original allotments over time
(Source: Certificate of Title, volume 3814, folio 601)

Analysis of the directory entries for the longer east-west running streets across the whole estate (not all of which is included in the precinct) - that is the south side of Miller, Keon, Rennie, Fyffe, Hutton, Harold, and north side of Smith streets - at this time reveals that between about two and thirteen houses were constructed in each of these streets by the end of 1919, for a total of about 50 houses.⁹³

As a result of the sales, and the increased development in this part of Thornbury generally, the Victorian Government set aside land for the Thornbury Primary School on Hutton Street (east of St Georges Road) in 1914.⁹⁴ During the next year the government allocated £4000 for the construction of streets in the estate. The Northcote City Council was charged with supervising the work which employed about 50 men.⁹⁵ Likely in response to the steady sales in the estate, Council approved a recommendation in 1917 plans to construct Hutton Street from St Georges Road to Bracken Avenue, and part of Hobson Street.⁹⁶

Interwar period

Driven by improvements in transport systems, the Northcote area (including Thornbury) grew swiftly during the Interwar period with the population rising from 26,000 to well over 42,000 between the wars.⁹⁷ House construction accordingly ballooned, from around 6,500 houses at the end of WWI to more than 11,000 by the start of WWII.⁹⁸ The large majority of this growth occurred in the 1920s, spurred on by the electrification of the Heidelberg railway line between Clifton Hill and Reservoir in 1921 that facilitated quicker travel to Melbourne.⁹⁹

By the middle of the 1920s the majority of original lots in the Estate had been sold and by the end of the decade there were few left to purchase.¹⁰⁰ A major boost to the sales and development in the Estate was likely to have been the opening of the West Preston Tramway and the Melbourne Metropolitan Tramways Board workshops nearby on St Georges Road, which both

⁹³ Sands & McDougall's directories, 1914-1919

⁹⁴ *Age*, 2 July 1914, p7

⁹⁵ 'Thornbury Park Estate', *Preston Leader*, 23 January 1915, p2

⁹⁶ 'Northcote City Council', *Preston Leader*, 15 December 1917, p4

⁹⁷ Context, *City of Darebin Heritage Study Volume 1: Draft Thematic Environmental History*, August 2008, p31; A Lemon, *The Northcote Side of the River*, p184

⁹⁸ A Lemon, *The Northcote Side of the River*, p184

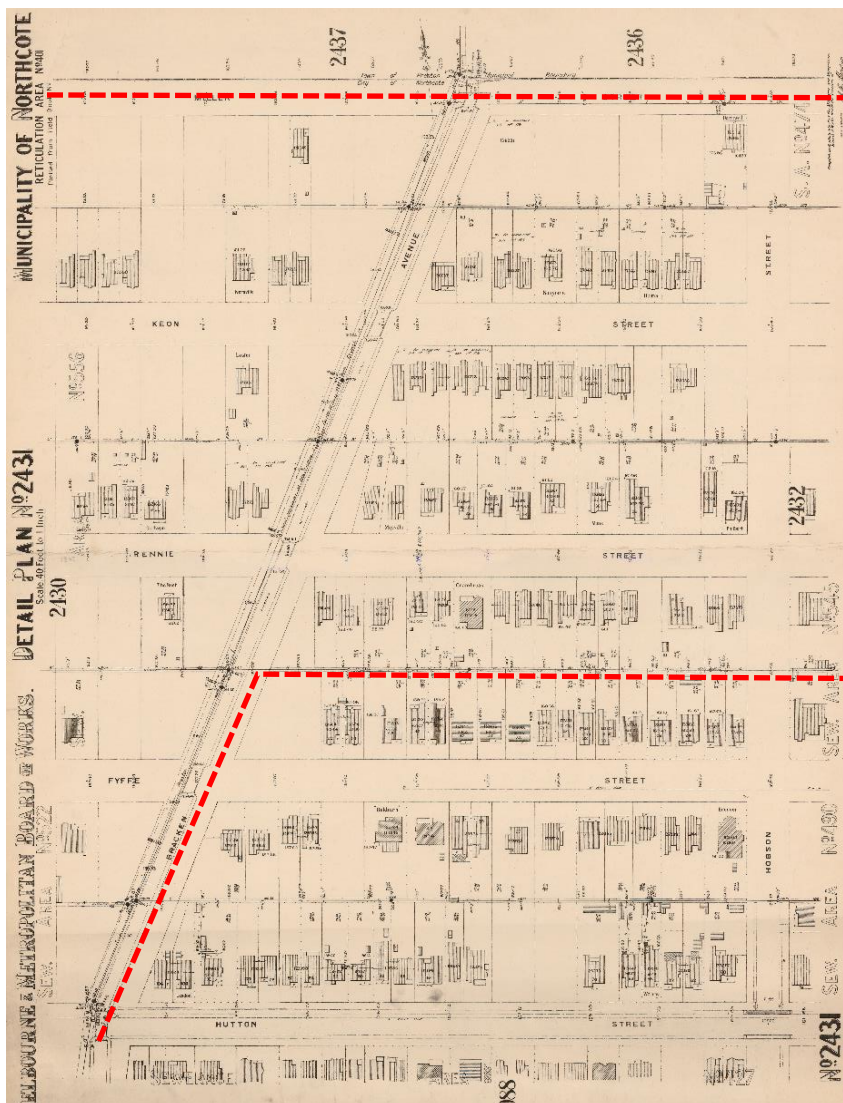
⁹⁹ Context, *Darebin Heritage Study Stage 2*, 2007, p35; Croxton, vicsig.net/infrastructure/location/Croxton, accessed 12 February 2020

¹⁰⁰ Certificate of Title, Vol. 3184, Folio 601

occurred in 1920.¹⁰¹ With the of the railway line as far as Reservoir in 1921, the ease of travel to and from the Estate was even more assured.¹⁰²

At the start of the decade there were around 80 houses in the part of the estate bound by Miller Street, St Georges Road, Smith Street and Comas Grove, with most centred around the south and middle parts (Smith and Hutton in particular) with little development to the north (Keon and Miller streets).¹⁰³ By the decade's end that had grown to over 600, with something like with most of the construction occurring during the first half of that decade (for instance, 75 houses were constructed in 1924). The peripheries of the Estate, including Miller Street and the area west of Comas Grove remained less attractive during this time and experienced less construction.¹⁰⁴

The 1924 MMBW detail plan reproduced below shows a section of the east part of the Estate during this intensive period of development. By this time, whole blocks on Hutton, Fyffe, Rennie and Keon streets had been developed, although the land to the west of Bracken Avenue had experienced comparatively less development than that to the east.



A portion of the Estate in 1924, precinct area between dashed lines
(Source: SLV, MMBW detail Plan 2431)

¹⁰¹ Andrew Ward, *Darebin Heritage Review Volume 1* 2000, p131

¹⁰² Vicsig, Thornbury, <http://vicsig.net/infrastructure/location/Thornbury>, accessed 12 February 2020

¹⁰³ Sands and MacDougall's Directory, 1920,

¹⁰⁴ Sands and MacDougall's Directory survey, 1920-1930

During the 1920s many of the original 66-foot-wide allotments were subdivided to form narrower 33-foot-wide allotments, almost doubling the available building lots. Northcote Council adopted a scheme of street construction in mid-1928, spending £3200 to extend Keon Street, from Bracken Avenue to Comas Grove.¹⁰⁵ This is consistent with the general pattern of road construction which began in the eastern part and moved to the west.

It is likely that many of the modest timber bungalows were constructed by local builders Stewart and Davies who were prolific in the Preston/Northcote area during the Interwar period. By 1926, they were reported to have designed and constructed 'hundreds' of homes in the Northcote/Preston area.¹⁰⁶ This included the area just west of the Preston Tram Depot (current Preston Tramway Estate) and elsewhere, constructing similar Bungalow types.¹⁰⁷ Later they expanded to the western suburbs, and had constructed over 50 homes in Newport by 1927.¹⁰⁸

Stewart and Davies developed a set of readymade designs for timber or brick houses complete with numerous modern internal amenities, and marketed them towards buyers of modest incomes.¹⁰⁹ They advertised for houses on Miller, Keon and Harold streets in 1924 and were likely responsible for many more of the distinctive bungalow types in the Estate featuring the broad verandah column, which was somewhat of a characteristic of theirs.¹¹⁰ By 1927 at least, the construction of the houses were advertised as under 'architect supervision', although it is not known whether an architect was responsible for their designs.¹¹¹ Stewart and Davies reportedly ceased operating in 1938 due to outstanding debts.¹¹²

The image of the timber clad house reproduced below depicts one of the Bungalow types designs sold by Stewart and Davies during this time. Note the broad tapered verandah column.



Example of a timber Bungalow advertised by Stewart and Davies in 1927, similar to some of the houses constructed in the estate during this time

(Source: 'Stop Paying Rent', *Herald*, 13 July 1927, p16)

¹⁰⁵ *Age*, 13 June 1928, p19

¹⁰⁶ *Herald*, 22 September 1926, p5

¹⁰⁷ Andrew Ward, *Darebin Heritage Review*, p127

¹⁰⁸ *Werribee Shire Banner*, 24 November 1927, p4

¹⁰⁹ *Age*, 11 December 1926, p10

¹¹⁰ *Age*, 6 December 1924, p12

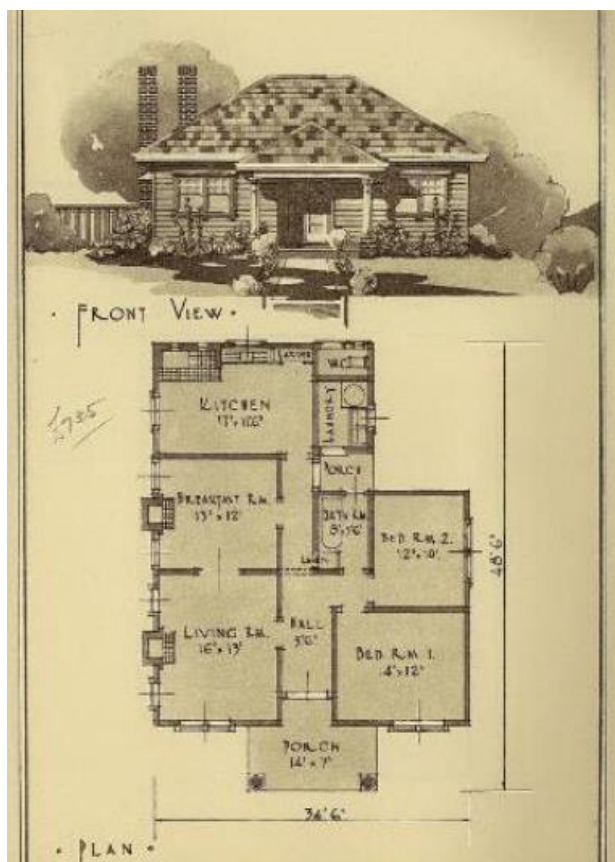
¹¹¹ *Herald*, 2 November 1927, p31

¹¹² *Argus*, 10 September 1938, p4

Another source for the design and construction of some of the modest timber houses constructed in the Estate during this time was the State Savings Bank of Victoria housing loan scheme. Established by the *Housing and Reclamation Act 1920*, the State Savings Bank became authorised to lend money to approved persons to construct houses to a series of set designs.¹¹³

The original scheme consisted of around 50 designs by architect A Burrige Leith which cost between £100 and £200. The designs were mostly timber and generally of five rooms (with a sleep out or additional bedroom as an option).¹¹⁴ These early designs were largely detached Bungalows, although later they incorporated other emerging domestic styles.¹¹⁵ By virtue of the scheme, the State Savings Bank became heavily involved in the provision of housing in the State, indeed by the mid-1920s the bank was the largest home builder in Victoria.¹¹⁶ The Northcote/Preston area was no exception, with the designs of the State Savings Bank scheme heavily relied upon in many of the Interwar subdivisions throughout.¹¹⁷ Research has shown that the Commissioners of the Bank called tenders for the construction of multiple timber framed dwellings in the Estate throughout the 1920s, with three separate tenders called on 31 May 1922 alone.¹¹⁸

An example of a 1936 design for a timber dwelling from the State Savings Bank scheme is included below, one of the many designs that were being constructed throughout Melbourne's developing suburbs during the Interwar period.



A 1936 plan for a timber dwelling from the State Savings Bank of Victoria
(Source: *Design book: Timber Dwellings*, State Savings Bank of Victoria)

¹¹³ Seamus O'Hanlon, *State Bank Homes*, eMelbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01421b.htm>, accessed 5 February 2020

¹¹⁴ Graeme Butler, *The California Bungalow in Australia*, 1992, p42

¹¹⁵ S O'Hanlon, *State Bank Homes*

¹¹⁶ Context, *City of Darebin Heritage Study Volume 1: Draft Thematic Environmental History*, August 2008, p31

¹¹⁷ Context, *City of Darebin Heritage Study Volume 1: Draft Thematic Environmental History*, August 2008, p75

¹¹⁸ *Herald*, 31 May 1922, p16; *Argus*, 30 November 1921, p17; *Herald*, 25 April 1923, p4; *Herald*, 16 July 1924, p5

The contemporary photograph of 103 Fyffe Street reproduced below displays many of the common characteristics of the timber clad Bungalows constructed in the Estate during this time, complete with landscaping elements such as the garden path and likely cyclone wire fencing.



A 1932 photograph of 103 Fyffe Street

(Source: *Darebin Heritage website*, <http://heritage.darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au/article/836>, accessed 13 February 2020)

In response to the swift residential development, a small commercial area developed on St Georges Road to service the growing Estate during the early to mid-1920s (outside the precinct).¹¹⁹ In the latter half of the decade, a second commercial area (within the precinct) sprung up on Miller Street near the corner with Taylor Street which included a greengrocer, dairy and pastry producer, grocer, butcher and newsagent amongst some light industry.¹²⁰

Although not part of the Thornbury Park Estate subdivision, the adjacent small area between Fyffe and Hill streets developed in a commensurate manner as the western part of the said subdivision with a preponderance of brick and/or more substantial Interwar housing. A dairy was in operation on Comas Grove near Hutton Street by 1915, operated by David McNamara, part of the McNamara family who had been involved with the area since the late 19th century.¹²¹ Later, around 1925, McNamara had the substantial brick building at 33 Comas Grove constructed.¹²²

The estate attracted those in the lower-middle classes (employed men but those who were otherwise priced out of the established suburbs in the east and south) which was consistent with Northcote's consolidation as a working class suburb at the time.¹²³ The demographic of the residents is demonstrated by the 'off the plan' house and package designs provided by local builders and the employment of the State Savings Bank of Victoria scheme. It is also evident in the professions of the occupants which in 1929 included builders, poultry farmers, butchers, and one coach builder and tanner.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Sands and MacDougall's Directory survey, 1920 and 1925

¹²⁰ Sands and MacDougall's Directory survey, 1925 and 1930

¹²¹ Sands and MacDougall's Directory, 1915, p472

¹²² Sands and MacDougall's Directory, 1925, p619

¹²³ Context, *City of Darebin Heritage Study Volume 1: Draft Thematic Environmental History*, August 2008, p71

¹²⁴ Sands and MacDougall's Directory, 1929

The results of this intensive development phase are evident in the 1931 aerial photograph reproduced below. Most lots east of Comas Grove had been developed. The newly laid roads west of Bracken Avenue are also evident. At this time the piggery on the north side of Miller Street was still in operation.¹²⁵



November 1931 aerial photograph of the estate with precinct boundary indicated
(Source: Landata, Maldon Prison, Run 14, Frame 2768)

¹²⁵

1931 MMBW detail plan 11E

During the course of the 1930s, only a few houses were added in each of the long east-west running street, with the most being in Fyffe Street.¹²⁶

The increased development in Northcote at this time facilitated the growth of the localities Croxton, Westgarth and Thornbury and the subsequent fragmenting of the suburb.¹²⁷ Reflective of this burgeoning identity Thornbury was separated from Northcote in the Sands and MacDougall's Directory in 1929.¹²⁸

Post-WWII period

By the late 1940s, the substantive part of the Estate east of Comas Grove had been developed, evident in the following aerial of 1946.

¹²⁶ Sands & MacDougall's directories, 1930-1938
¹²⁷ A Lemon, *The Northcote Side of the River*, p184
¹²⁸ Sands and MacDougall's Directory, 1929



1946 aerial photograph of the north-east part of the precinct (boundary dashed)
(Source: Landata, Melbourne and Metropolitan Area Project, Run 31, Frame 61586)

In the mid-1950s, the open drain along Bracken Avenue was covered over, eliminating the noxious presence of storm water.

In the post-WWII period the Commonwealth Government began a program of population building via immigration. Although initially the preference was British migrants more than half of the people who contributed to the overall post-WWII migration movement were from a non-English-speaking background.¹²⁹ Confronting barriers to integration including prejudice and language, the migrants chose to build their own communities, which resulted in concentrations of the new migrants in specific suburbs.¹³⁰ The Northcote area was among such places, with an initially largely Italian wave of immigration in the 1950s followed by a second wave of mostly Greeks in the 1960s–1970s. Compared with a pre-war time population of practically zero, 22 percent of the Northcote population were Greek and Italian born in 1976.¹³¹

The housing stock in the estate was influenced by this shift in demographic, with some early/original buildings replaced by brick veneer residences, many designed in the distinctive idiom typically chosen by southern European immigrants in this period. Other earlier buildings were modified according to taste/style or to accommodate lifestyle requirements, including the installation of productive gardens and painting treatments.

Thornbury continued to attract immigrants into the late 20th century, and in 1996 around 40 percent of the population was born overseas.¹³² More recently, with increasing house prices in the inner-city suburbs as well as nearby Northcote, the early 20th century housing stock in Thornbury has once again become attractive.¹³³ This phase of demographic change appears to have resulted in some limited change to the historic building stock, with some replacement of earlier houses.

Thematic Context

In regards to the thematic context, the relevant themes are derived from the *City of Darebin Heritage Study Volume 1: Thematic Environmental History (Stage 2 Report)*, prepared by Context P/L, August 2008, which are as follows:

- 2.3 Promoting settlement - Crown Land Sales 1838-40
- 2.4 Housing assistance schemes in the twentieth century - State Bank houses
- 4.1 Utilising natural resources - Farming and grazing

Comparative Analysis

The Thornbury Park Estate Precinct is one of a few precincts in the municipality that illustrates the growth of the area during the Federation and Interwar periods and is among the largest. Subdivisions, and precincts, of this scale are unusual on a broader scale and at this level of intactness and/or consistency.

The subdivision of the precinct during the Federation period was part of a phase of subdivision that re-commenced in the area at this time, after the limited and smaller-scale attempts during the late 19th century had gained little traction. Unusually two large holdings had remained in the ownership of large financial institutions, who presumably realised the opportunity for suburban development in this part of the municipality.

The intense Interwar phase of development – fuelled by improvements to tram services and the speculative activities of local builders – was one of rapid construction activity over a large area. During this time the locality of Thornbury began to formalise as a distinct area within the municipality of Northcote. The precinct's principal building typology, the modest weatherboard bungalow, was an economical version of the brick bungalow types more common in established/affluent suburbs. Both catered for the diverse middling ranks of Australian society, with residences of a timbered type more attainable than a brick dwelling.

Known comparable places in the City of Darebin

Comparable precincts which include an earlier layer of Federation (and/or Victorian) period development, before the principal Interwar phase in the municipality are:

- HO104 Collins Street, Preston – This precinct consists of a few Federation period houses in the Queen Anne style, with a high proportion of Interwar period bungalows in a variety of modes, with few examples of the other styles of the latter

¹²⁹ Bob Birrel, *Ethnic Population*, 'Emelbourne', , <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00535b.htm>, accessed 2 February 2020

¹³⁰ Birrel, *Ethnic Population*

¹³¹ A Lemon, *The Northcote Side of the River*, p266

¹³² Andrew May, *Thornbury*, Emelbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01491b.htm>, accessed 3 February 2020

¹³³ A May, *Thornbury*

Interwar period represented – primarily a couple of Old English/Tudor Revival style houses. The precinct is differentiated by several large allotments with substantial/premier houses on generous grounds by comparison with the Thornbury Park Estate. Construction is mostly brick with fewer timber examples. The integrity of the precinct has been affected by some unsympathetic second storeys and replacement of original buildings, though continuity is provided by the street planting of Desert Ash trees.

- Queen Street Precinct, Reservoir (HO308). This is a small linear precinct comprised of some 60 residential properties. The building stock predominantly dates to the Interwar period, though there are a three earlier Federation/Edwardian period houses. The allotment sizes are more consistent and so too is the building scale. As in the Thornbury Park Estate, there are many bungalows, however there is similar amount of timber and brick examples. There is a greater proportion of houses from the 1930s (at the east end), all masonry, with a few reflecting the influence of the Georgian Revival, Old English/ Tudor Revival or Moderne style, with others being less stylistically definable. Roof cladding is predominantly tiled as compared to corrugated metal sheeting so that overall the housing is more substantial than many of the buildings in the Thornbury Park Estate.
- Preston State School (HO169). A smaller precinct, which consists mostly of Interwar period housing, especially timber bungalows, but includes a few pairs of Victorian single storey cottages on Scotia Street from the initial late 19th century phase of subdivision.
- Bell Railway (HO170). A small precinct in Preston with some Federation period development but mostly dates to the Interwar period, mainly the 1920s. The housing is also generally of a modest scale though brick with a plethora of bungalows, some with a consistent design and may be workers housing for one of the former nearby industries. The Federation period houses are often timber - Queen Anne or in a Victorian mode. There are a few houses dating to the 1930s.
- Regent G R Robinson Park (HO171). A smaller precinct with housing from the late Victorian, Federation and Interwar periods with varied streetscapes. There is a commodious Queen Anne style house at 2 Garden Street with weatherboard bungalows nearby on High Street and a group of brick Federation period houses south of the park. Crawley Street has mainly weatherboard houses from the three periods. Down Street retains many red brick bungalows in a consistent format. Given its distinct pockets of different periods and types of housing, the precinct has an unusual character.

A few precincts' period significance only relates to the Interwar period. Similar to the Thornbury Park Estate, they represent the swift phase of suburban development in parts of the municipality during the Interwar period, prompted by the improvements and expansion of transport networks.

- Northcote Sumner Estate (HO165). A large precinct with developed during the mid to late 1920s. The allotments are of a consistent size, similar to the original, larger type in the Thornbury Park Estate, and so many of the houses are also larger. The bungalow style predominates, with some examples typical of the early Federation period. Timber is the more prevalent wall material and corrugated sheet metal is the preferred roof cladding. In terms of form, front facing gables predominate. Given the narrow development time frame, there is considerable consistency in the housing stock across the precinct though there are replacement buildings and visible additions. There seems to be no examples from the 1930s/latter part of the Interwar period.
- Preston Tramway (HO168). This precinct in southern Preston is much smaller than the Thornbury Park Estate and is located just to its north. Its period of development was concentrated into the mid-1920s and hence there is a predominance of Californian bungalows and many of its original occupants/owners were likely employed in the nearby Preston tramway workshops. There is a more consistent allotment size and hence building size, which both are wider than many in the Thornbury Park Estate with a greater preponderance of brick residences. Unusually many of the bungalows in the Preston Tramway precinct have a hipped roof to the main part of the house as compared to the norm of completely gable roof forms for mid-1920s bungalows, which is evident in the Thornbury Park Estate.

Like the Thornbury Park Estate, some/many of the buildings in this precinct were designed and constructed by local builders Stewart and Davies..

- Preston Oakhill Avenue (HO172) in Reservoir, though larger than the adjacent to the Queen Street Precinct has a similar profile of building stock from the Interwar period, much dating to the 1920s, with a considerable portion from the 1930s. There are sections with timber bungalows in the side streets (Walsal Avenue, Ethel Grove, and Xavier Grove) with generally more substantial brick houses to Oakhill Avenue. The various popular styles of the 1930s are represented such as the Georgian Revival, Old English/Tudor Revival and Moderne, with a few suggesting the influence of the Mediterranean style, whilst others are more eclectic/less definable. Likewise, the prevailing roof cladding is tiling.

