

## 2.2 East St Kilda: Godfrey Avenue/Raglan Street Precinct

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### Existing Designations:

<b>Heritage Council Register:</b>	nil
<b>National Estate Register:</b>	nil
<b>National Trust Register:</b>	nil

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**History:** Plan No 5609, dated March 1911, shows that a large allotment of land extending between Queen Street and Raglan Street was subdivided to create a new thoroughfare, Godfrey Avenue, with thirty new residential allotments (of which eight fronted Raglan Street). Godfrey Avenue does not appear in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* until 1913, with entries for seven 'vacant houses' on the north side of the street, plus another (at No 4) already occupied by one Paul Einsiedel. On the south side were two houses, occupied by Boyd Macfarlane and Mrs E Lennon, flanked on each side by '3 vacant houses'. Another vacant house had also appeared just around the corner, at 9 Raglan Street.

The directory for the following year indicates that Godfrey Street, and the adjacent portion of Raglan Street, had filled out considerably. There were now thirteen occupied houses listed on each side of the street, plus "two houses being built" on the north side, at No 18 and 20. On Raglan Street, the house at No 9 (by then occupied by Mrs J Cotter) had been supplemented by three more at Nos 11, 29 and 31, straddling the Godfrey Avenue corner. This was followed, a year later, by entries in the directory for a 'house being built' at No 13, plus another two occupied houses at Nos 25 and 27.

Development evidently slowed down over the next few years, with the only addition being a pair of new houses at No 28-30 Godfrey Avenue, which appear in the 1918 directory. No further new entries appear until the directory for 1921, which lists "two houses being built" at Nos 13-15, "four houses being built" at Nos 25-31, and two newly occupied houses at Nos 39-41. The last undeveloped site in the street was No 36, on the corner of Queen Street, which was finally listed as a "house being built" in the 1923 directory.

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**Description:** The built fabric in Godfrey Avenue consists overwhelmingly of semi-detached pairs of single-storey brick dwellings in the Queen Anne Revival style, popularly referred to 'Federation'. These houses are typically asymmetrical in composition, with irregular hipped or gabled roofs clad in red terracotta tiles. The face red brick walls are articulated with roughcast rendered banding, and trims to chimneys and to the door and window openings. Many of the houses have curved bay windows, with spandrels above or below infilled with shingles, roughcast render or pressed metal. Windows are typically casement sashes in tripartite bays with highlights, often with leadlight glazing. Entrances are mostly set back to one side, sheltered by small verandahs with turned or square timber posts (some on brick piers) and shaped timber brackets or friezes.

An anomaly among these semi-detached pairs is that at No 6-8 which, although comparable in scale, materials and date (c.1913) is otherwise entirely different in its form and detailing, which harks back to Victorian single-fronted terrace housing. Although the use of red brick, roughcast render and turned timber posts place it unmistakably in the early twentieth century, some of the embellishments, including cast iron lacework, bullnosed verandah and vermiculated rustication, pays homage to the nineteenth century. The adjacent house at No 4, a detached brick dwelling, is also transitional, with bluestone sills, cast-iron lace and tuck-pointed brick.

Among the rows of semi-detached pairs are only five entirely detached houses, four of which date from the early 1910s. Although comparable in scale, these are more diverse in their style. In addition to the Victorian Style house at No 4, mentioned above, there is a fine Federation villa at No 26 (with turned timber posts, wavy timber frieze and terracotta ridge cresting) and a weatherboard house (a unique example in the street) in the form of a block-fronted villa, which, like the dwellings at Nos 4, 6 and 8, harks back to the Victorian era. The remaining example of a detached dwelling, at No 36, dates from 1923. It is of red

brick construction, but with soldier courses, a strapped gable end, and timber-framed double-hung sash windows.

Most of the houses in Godfrey Avenue have low timber picket fences, of which few - if any - appear to be original. A few (eg Nos 1-3 and 33) have dwarf brick walls with squat piers, typical of the inter-War era some have timber paling fences (eg Nos 23) or cyclone wire mesh in a timber frame (No 8). The street has narrow nature strips with mature planes trees, which make a significant contribution to the historic streetscape.

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#### References:

Lodged Plan No 5609, declared 15 March 1911  
MMBW Plan No 45 (c.1903)  
*Sands and McDougall Directory*. 1913 onwards

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#### Thematic Context:     **Building settlements, towns and cities:**

- ?     Planning urban settlement
  - ?     Making suburbs
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**Comparative Analysis:** There are several comparable streetscapes of semi-detached houses in the Queen Anne Revival style, developed in the first decade of the twentieth century. The *Port Phillip Heritage Review* identifies Lambeth Place, St Kilda East (part of HO6, the St Kilda East precinct) as having 'distinctive environmental character as a result principally of the row of Edwardian semi-detached houses'. While comparable to Godfrey Avenue in date and broad style, these houses are otherwise quite different in form, being paired single-fronted terraces in the Victorian manner. While there are indeed a few houses of this type in Godfrey Avenue (eg Nos 4-6), the overwhelming typology is of semi-detached pairs, which are individually asymmetrical in the mature Queen Anne Revival style.

The Edwardian houses in Lambeth Place, moreover, are entirely restricted to the west side of the street - the other side being developed with inter-war and post-war flats. Thus the streetscape is less cohesive than Godfrey Avenue, where the Edwardian houses strongly characterise both sides of the street, with only a few inter-war houses and no post-war buildings at all.

Pertinent comparison can also be drawn with Hawsleigh Avenue, St Kilda East, which forms part of HO316 (the *Carlisle Street (East)* precinct). Here, the Edwardian semi-detached houses are very similar to those in Godfrey Avenue - not only making use of the same palette of red brick, rendered banding and terracotta tile, but also echoing some specific detailing such as half-round bay windows with pressed metal or rough-case rendered spandrels. This strong similarity to houses in Godfrey Avenue might suggest that the two estates were, in fact, developed by the same architect or builder. However, like Lambeth Place, the Edwardian houses are restricted to only one side of the street (Nos 1 to 39 inclusive), with the other side of the street containing inter-war houses and flats, and some post-war developments. As such, Godfrey Avenue, with similar housing on *both* sides of the street, can be considered as a better example of this type and era.

Research to date suggests that there are relatively few examples of *entire* streets in the City of Port Phillip that are so strongly characterised by the type of housing seen in Godfrey Avenue. There is, for example, comparable Edwardian semi-detached housing on both sides of Milton Street in Elwood, but this is limited only to the two-block portion between Addison Street and Broadway. Glenmark Street in St Kilda is another such example, although, in this case, the street itself is very short - less than half the length of the portion of Milton Street, and one-third the length of Godfrey Avenue. Moreover, many of the houses themselves, which are in a similar Victorian form to those in Lambeth Place, have had their distinctive red brickwork defaced by overpainting.

**Statement of Significance:***What is Significant?*

The Godfrey Avenue precinct includes all of the land covered by LP 5609, comprising those houses along both sides of Godfrey Avenue (Nos 1-37 and 2-36) and well as eight houses fronting Raglan Street (Nos 9 to 23). The houses mostly date from the 1910s, being semi-detached pairs of dwellings in the Queen Anne Revival or Federation style, supplemented by some detached houses built during the 1920s.

*How is it Significant?*

The Godfrey Avenue Precinct is of historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

*Why is it Significant?*

Historically, the Godfrey Avenue Precinct provides evidence of a significant phase of settlement in East St Kilda area after the prosperous Land Boom period of the 1880s. The estate, laid out in 1911 alongside tracts of nineteenth-century worker's housing, developed very quickly over the next few years, and thus ably demonstrates how sought-after this area had become as a residential address in the early twentieth century.

Aesthetically, the Godfrey Avenue Precinct is a fine and particularly intact streetscape of modest semi-detached housing in the Queen Anne Revival style, characterised by asymmetrical composition, face red brickwork with rendered banding, curved bay windows and verandahs with turned timber posts and ornamental timberwork. The streetscape is enhanced by the sympathetic (if not original) timber picket fences, and street planting of mature plane trees.

**Recommendations:** Buildings and street trees recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the Port Phillip Planning Scheme.

**Assessment:** Simon Reeves, Heritage Alliance. June 2004.





Figure 1 North side of Godfrey Avenue



Figure 2 Typical semi-detached pair



Figure 3 South side of Godfrey Avenue



Figure 4 Weatherboard house at No 2



Figure 5 Edwardian pair, 17-19 Raglan St