

2.8 East St Kilda: Orange Grove Precinct

Existing Designations:

Heritage Council Register:	nil
National Estate Register:	nil
National Trust Register:	nil

History: Orange Grove first appeared in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* for 1890 - listing only two houses, both on the west side of the street. Subsequent development was slow, with MMBW Map No 47 (c.1903) showing that these two houses - depicted as an adjacent pair of double-fronted masonry villas- were still the only buildings in the street. Directories reveal that the houses were later known as *Bonnie Doon* and *Walhola*, later still designated as Nos 18 and 20. During 1904, a third house was erected at No 14, referred to as *Llangana* and occupied by one Emile Durre. This row of three modest dwellings remains the only buildings in Orange Grove for another decade.

Serious residential development took off in the years during and immediately after the First World War. The 1916 directory lists a 'house being built' on the west side of the street (now No 12), and Ah Sing, market gardener, on the east side. In 1917, the directory noted another 'house being built' (now no 24) on the west side and, a year later, a new dwelling at No 8 and yet another 'house being built' on the east side. The directory for 1919 listed six houses on the west side, and three on the east- plus market gardener Ah Sing, who disappeared entirely from directory listings the following year.

By 1920, street numbers had been further codified: the directory lists five houses on the east side, designated for the first time as 17, 19, 21, 23 and 25. The six existing houses on the west side - numbered 8, 12, 14, 18, 20 and 24 - were supplemented by two new additions, designated as Nos 26 and 30. This minor boom continued into the early 1920s, and included those dwellings at No 15 (c.1920), No 13 (c.1921), No 10 (c.1922), the *Wittonia Flats* at No 27 (c.1922), the *Sunnyside Flats* at No 29 (c.1923) and four houses numbered 2, 4, 6 and 8 (c.1923).

This minor boom had abated by the late 1920s, although the next decade would see the few remaining vacant allotments in Orange Grove being developed. These included a house at No 16 (c.1927) and the *Sunnyside Court Flats*, on the west corner of Orange Grove and Inkerman Street, which were listed as 'flats being built' in the 1935 directory. The latter was mentioned in a 1935 article in the *Star* newspaper which described the burgeoning residential development of the East St Kilda area:

Another interesting investment was Sunnyside Court, at the corner of Inkerman Road and Orange Grove. It contains 6 individual dwellings, which were very quickly let at an average of £1 18 a week.

This development was followed by the *Bon Accord Flats*, built c.1937 between the two Victorian villas at 18 and 20 Orange Grove, subsequently numbered as 18a. This was followed by two more blocks of flats, located at Nos 31 and 33, built in the early 1940s.

Thus, by the end of the Second World War, all allotments in Orange Grove had been built upon. The street saw some changes during the post-War period, the most significant being the demolition in the mid-1960s of the two oldest houses in the street, at Nos 18 and 20, and their replacement by blocks of double-storey blocks of flats. Two more blocks of flats would be built, at No 22 (c.1966) and No 10 (c.1970).

Description: The Orange Grove streetscape consists overwhelmingly of building stock from the late 1910s and early 1920s - mostly detached bungalows, plus a few double-storey blocks of flats. The built fabric from that period is supplemented by a few slightly earlier houses, dating from the earlier 1910s and some slightly later houses, dating from the 1920s and '30s. There are also four post-war buildings, in the form of two- or three-storeyed blocks of flats.

The earliest houses in the street date from the period 1905 to 1915, and are in the prevailing Queen Anne Revival or so-called Federation idiom characterised by terracotta tiled rooves, exposed red brickwork, and rough-cast gable ends. The oldest surviving house in the street, at No 14, has been much altered by rendering and re-roofing, but still retains some evidence of its original period in the form of bracketed eaves, roughcast render and stringcourses. The adjacent house, at No 12 (c.1915), is a more intact, if somewhat unusual, example of the style: a symmetrical façade presenting a rough-cast gable end to the street, with round-arched central doorway flanked by multi-paned timber-framed double-hung sash windows.

The bungalow-style houses of the period 1915 to 1925 are typically double-fronted detached single or attic-storeyed villas of face red brick construction, variously enlivened with roughcast render, half-timbering (eg No 25) or shingles to gable ends (eg Nos 6, 8, 28) or window spandrels (eg No 11, 17, 30) or both (No 15). Their facades are dominated by wide porches which incorporate a wide range of compositional details: capped brick piers (eg No 4, 6 and 8), tapered pillars (No 11, 17, 24) or timber posts on squat brick plinths (No 23, 26). Most of the bungalows have bay windows - variously rectangular (No 19, 27) canted (No 21, 23, 25, 26) or curved (No 24, 30) - containing timber-framed sashes with leadlight glazing.

The double-storey flats in Orange Grove include two (the *Sunnyside Flats* and *Wittoria Flats*) dating from the mid-1920s; they are of face brick construction (respectively red brick and clinker brick) with simple terracotta tiled rooves. The blocks of flats at Nos 31-33, although somewhat later in date, are very similar, while the *Bon Accord Flats* at No 18a are entirely different - rendered brick exterior with recessed banding, raised rendered lettering, and a roof of terracotta pantiles. The *Sunnyside Court Flats*, at 331 Inkerman Street, are a substantial double-storey complex in the Tudor Revival idiom, with steeply pointed roof and decorative clinker brickwork.

The post-War blocks of flats at Nos 10, 18, 20 and 22 are sympathetic in scale, even if not in form and materials, to the prevailing pre-War building stock. The examples at Nos 10, 18 and 20 are unremarkable, while No 22 (c.1966) is an interesting specimen in its own right, clearly architect-designed, with a dominating flat roof, cantilevered corner balconies, mosaic tiled spandrels, terrazzo paving and remnants of original landscaping.

References:

MMBW Plan No 47 (c.1903)

Sands and McDougall Directory, 1900 onwards.

The Star. 12 March 1935. (courtesy Robin Grow, Art Deco Society, Inc)

Thematic Context: Building settlements, towns and cities:

? Planning urban settlement

? Making suburbs

Comparative Analysis: Orange Grove is significant as an intact streetscape of inter-war houses, consisting almost entirely of bungalow-style houses built during the 1920s, supplemented by some detached dwellings and flats, in various styles, built during the 1930s. In this regard, it can be compared to a number of areas and streets within the City of Port Phillip which form part of larger heritage precincts.

In his description of the *Brighton Road (Elwood) Area* (HO 318), Andrew Ward specifically identifies two parallel streets, Heaton Avenue and Burns Street, as a notable epicentre for California Bungalows, enhanced by settings with bluestone gutters and mature plane trees. The former is surely one of the most cohesive examples in the entire municipality, as the street consists entirely of California Bungalows to the exclusion of other styles of inter-war housing. This remarkable cohesion is compromised only by a modest double-storey block of post-war flats at the extreme east end of the street, and an adjacent 1920s bungalow which is presently in a state of partial demolition. Otherwise, the bungalows themselves are generally fine and intact examples, although some have had discrete second-storey additions of recent origin. Moreover, only about half of the bungalows in the street retain

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original front fences. While the Orange Grove streetscape is less cohesive than Heaton Avenue, the individual bungalows themselves tend to be more intact, with almost all of them retaining original front fences.

More pertinent comparison can be drawn with Quat Quatta Avenue in Ripponlea, which forms part of the *Elwood, St Kilda, Balaclava, Ripponlea Area* (H07). Here, the grounds of the eponymous mansion, Quat Quatta, were subdivided in 1911 and again in 1920, with the allotments subsequently developed with what Andrew Ward described as 'inter-war bungalows'. Closer inspection shows that the north-south portion of Quat Quatta Avenue indeed remains as a cohesive streetscape of notably intact California Bungalows, although the corresponding east-west portion of the street has been much compromised by the construction of post-war apartment blocks. Notwithstanding its significance, the north-south portion of the street, however, is less than half the length of Orange Grove, so the latter can be considered as a much better example.

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

The Orange Grove Precinct, comprising all houses along both sides of Orange Grove, designated as Nos 11-33 and Nos 4-30, as well as the large block of inter-War flats on the adjacent Inkerman Street corner (designated as No 331 Inkerman Street). This houses consists overwhelmingly of bungalow-style dwellings in the form of single-storey detached dwellings, with a few double-storey flats or duplexes; these are supplemented by some later houses (1930s) and some post-War flats (1960s)

How is it significant?

The Orange Grove Precinct is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Port Phillip.

Why is it significant?

Historically, the Orange Grove Precinct is a representative and particularly intact example of the type of residential settlement that took place in East St Kilda in the late 1910s and early 1920s, when large Victorian estates were subdivided to create new estates. The street itself was laid out in the late 1880s but remained almost entirely undeveloped until the First World War. Lesser development during the later 1930s filled out the street that, with the exception of four post-war buildings, remains as an intact streetscape of inter-War dwellings.

Aesthetically, the Orange Grove Precinct is a fine and particularly intact streetscape of the bungalow-style houses which proliferated in the early 1920s, characterised by face brickwork, terracotta tiled rooves and distinctive broad verandahs in a variety of configurations. The survival of original front fences (in the form of brick walls) in many cases enhances the setting. The bungalow houses are complemented by some fine examples of housing from later periods, including the Tudor Revival *Sunnyside Court Flats* at 331 Inkerman Street (c.1934), the Moderne *Bon Accord* flats at No 18a (c.1937), and the stylish architect-designed post-War flats at No 22 (c.1966).

Recommendations: Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the Port Phillip Planning Scheme.

Assessment: Simon Reeves, Heritage Alliance. June 2004.

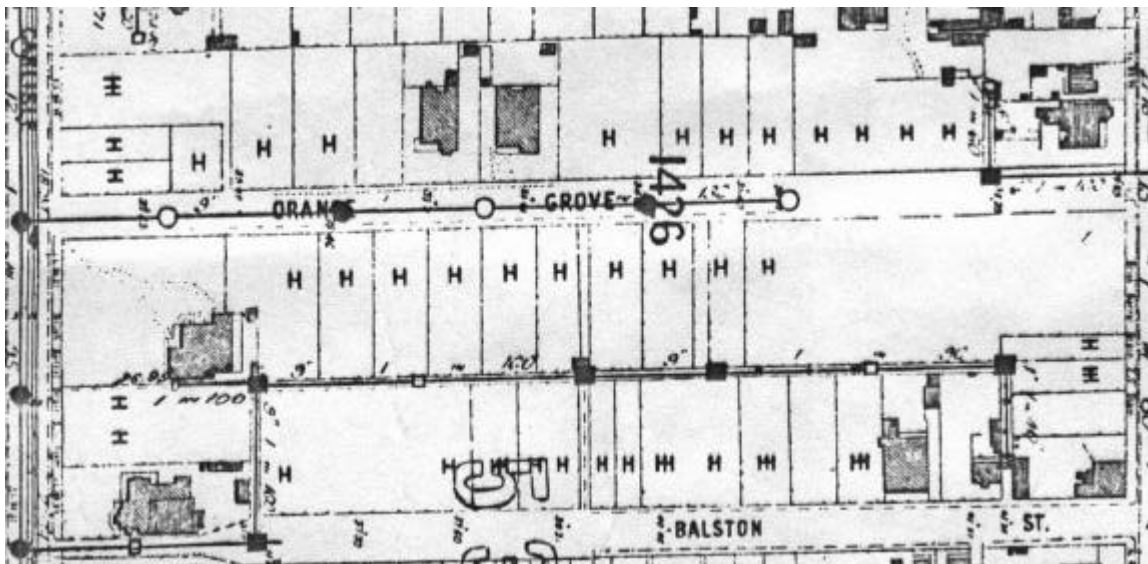
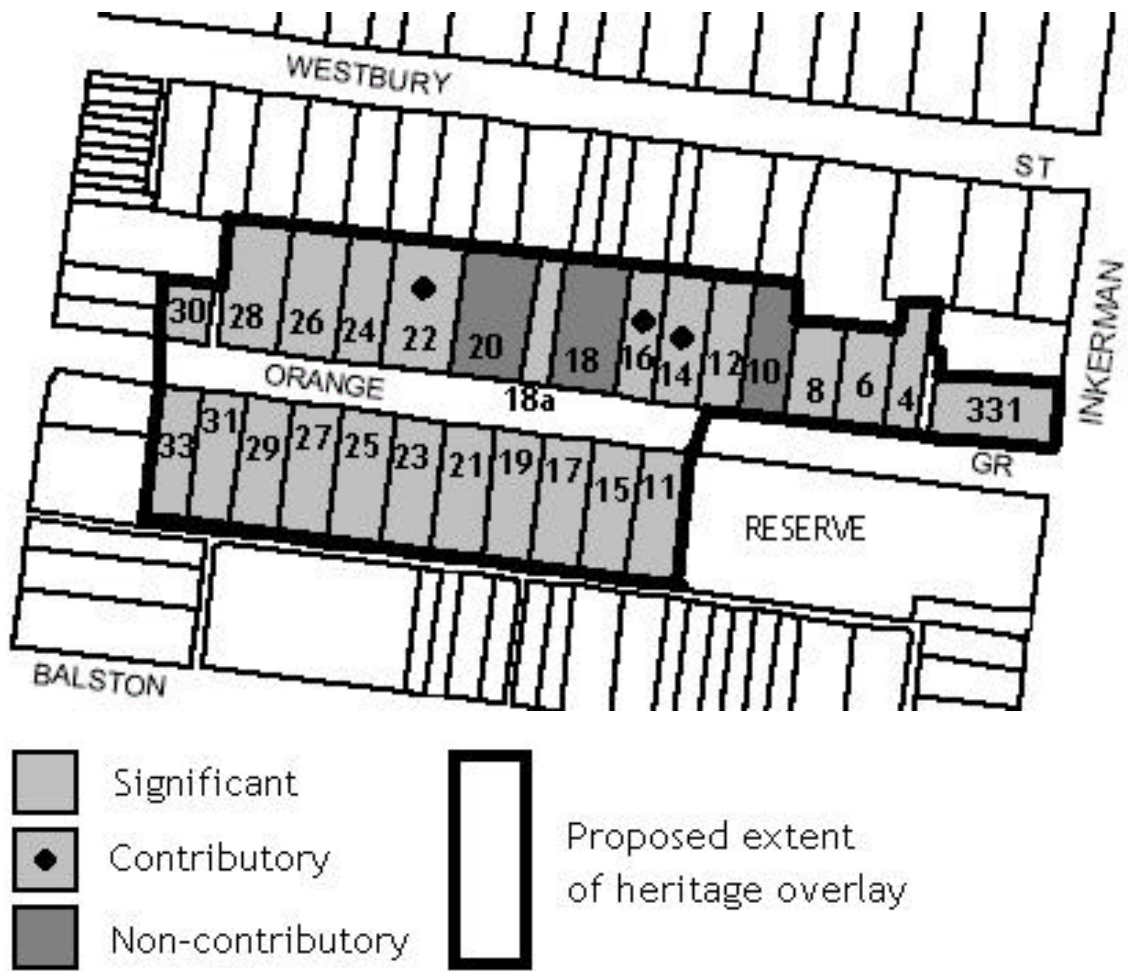


Figure 1 MMBW Map (c.1903) showing limited development of Orange Grove by that time



Figure 2 Housing, east side of Orange Gve



Figure 3 Housing, west side of Orange Gve



Figure 4 Wittonia Flats at No 27 (c.1922)



Figure 5 Typical 1920s bungalow



Figure 6 Bon Accord Flats at No 18a (1937)



Figure 7 Post-war flats at No 22 (c.1966)