

2.3 East St Kilda: Hammerdale Avenue Precinct

Existing Designations:

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

History: Hammerdale Avenue developed on the site of the eponymous mansion, *Hammerdale*, formerly 119 Alma Road, which was built c.1868 for Hugh Mitchell Campbell Gemmell, (1827-79), a prominent Melbourne auctioneer with the firm of Gemmell, Tucker & Company. The first stage of the subdivision, auctioned in December 1925, consisted of eleven new allotments: five on the east side of part of Hammerdale Avenue which ran north-south, and the other six on each side of the east-west dogleg which connected the new avenue to Young Street. The mansion itself was retained on Lot 1 (later designated as No 1 Hammerdale Avenue) and was offered for sale along with the ten vacant lots on 5 December 1925. The auction flyer described the house as:

A most substantial and commodious brick villa containing 15 large rooms (including 3 bathrooms), pantries, linen presses, large cellar, kitchen, scullery, laundry, internal sewerage, hot and cold water service, garages and outbuildings. It is laid out with every modern convenience.

The mansion was subsequently converted into the Hammerdale Guest House, which remained in operation for several decades. The adjacent vacant land, meanwhile, was auctioned 'practically without reserve on remarkably eager terms'; it was duly noted that the allotments were already fully landscaped with lawns, palms and shrubbery 'and need not be interfered with - a great saving to purchasers'. One prominent landscape element was a large tree, retained in what became the back yard of the house at No 7.

Hammerdale Avenue does not actually appear in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* until 1929, when only three occupants were listed: Walter G Thorpe on the east side of the street (now No 26), and, on the west side, Mrs J E Sutton (No 3) and Gerald O'Callaghan (No 7). There was evidently little development over the next few years; in 1933, the directory identified "two houses being built" next to O'Callaghan's - probably the semi-detached Spanish Mission houses at Nos 11-11A, which were occupied by Peter and Roy Jessen. This was followed in 1934, by listings for two new blocks of single-storey flats at No 17 (*Carbeethon Flats*) and No 32, and a new house at No 9, occupied by manufacturer Benjamin Burman. The year 1935 saw three more semi-detached pairs appear in the directory: No 13-25 Hammerdale Avenue, and Nos 2-8 Jervois Street.

By this time, the land along the west wide of Hammerdale Avenue was almost entirely developed, while only two properties - the California Bungalow at No 26 and the small block of Tudor Revival flats at No 32 - had been built on the east side. The directory for 1936, however, indicates that a minor building boom had suddenly taken place, with seven new listings on the east side of the street including individual houses at Nos 6, 14 and 23, and semi-detached pairs at Nos 10-12 and 28-30. Another pair, at No 5-5a, appeared in 1937 and yet another, at No 22-24, in 1938.

The last additions to the streetscape before the end of the Second World War were three prominent double-storey buildings: a duplex at No 18 (listed as 'house being built' in the directory for 1939) and blocks of flats at Nos 2, 4 and 6, which were completed in the early 1940s following the subdivision of land on the east corner of Hammerdale Avenue and Alma Road. The most significant change made to Hammerdale Avenue in the post-War period was the demolition of the eponymous mansion at No 1, which was replaced by a multi-storey block of flats during the 1970s. Another block of flats was built on the adjacent property at No 3, although the earlier house on the site - one of the first to be built on the new Hammerdale Estate in the mid-1920s - was retained at the rear, and still survives to this day.

Description: Hammerdale Avenue comprises a standard straight suburban roadway, running north-south, but with a distinctive fork at the southern end where the road curves into Young Street and abuts clumsily into Jervois Street. These odd junctions clearly reveal the street's origin as part of a new inter-war subdivision that was connected into two existing nineteenth century streets. This has also resulted in some allotments of odd size and shape (notably Nos 17, 24 and 26). The housing in the precinct is overwhelmingly of the 1930s period, with the exception of a few houses built in the late 1920s or early 1940s. Although there are a few individual detached dwellings (eg Nos 3, 7, 8, 9, 26), most are multi-dwelling units in various forms: semi-detached pairs (Nos 5-5A, 11-11A, 18-20, 28-30 Hammerdale; 2-4 and 6-8 Jervois), blocks of single-storey flats (No 17, 30-32) or double-storey flats/duplexes (Nos 2, 4, 6, 18-20).

All buildings are of masonry construction, with hipped roofs of terracotta or cement tile; most are single-storey, with only a few double-storey blocks of flats on the east side. Otherwise, the housing displays stylistic diversity, representing several of the ubiquitous styles that characterised Australian domestic architecture during the 1930s. There are several houses in the Tudor Revival idiom, with clinker brickwork, gabled parapets and leaded glazing (No 7, 10-12), a particularly fine semi-detached house in the Spanish Mission style (No 11-11A) with shaped gables and roughly rendered walls, and several double-storey Moderne-style flats including, notably, the example at No 18-22 with its curved corners, sandblasted glazing and rendered walls with tapestry brick trimming. Also particularly notable is the house at No 26 - one of the oldest in the street - which is a particularly fine example of a California Bungalow. The *Carbeethon Flats* at No 17 is a single-storey block of three flats of an unusual form that anticipates post-war villa units, made even more distinctive by its freestanding triple garage at Young Street corner. A significant landscape element is the large tree at the rear of the house at No 7, which is a remnant of the landscaped grounds of the original *Hammerdale* mansion.

References:

MMBW Plan No 46 (c.1903)

Sands and McDougall Directory (various).

Auction flyer, 5 December 1925 (copy provided by resident of Hammerdale Avenue)

Information provided by Robin Grow and David Thompson, Art Deco Society, Inc.

Miles Lewis and Terry Sawyer, *Melbourne Mansions Database*. On-line publication.

Thematic Context: Building settlements, towns and cities:

? Planning urban settlement

? Making suburbs

Comparative Analysis: Within the City of Port Phillip, Hammerdale Avenue is most comparable with much of the suburb of Elwood, to the west of Brighton Road. Here, there are many streets that exhibit a similar mix of inter-war housing: single-storey dwellings (detached houses and semi-detached pairs) and double-storey dwellings (duplexes and blocks of flats) in a palette of styles including California Bungalow, Tudor Revival, Spanish Mission, Georgian Revival and Moderne. These parts of Elwood include much of Mitford Street, Ruskin Street, Broadway, Goldsmith Street and elsewhere, where the inter-war houses typically survive with varying degrees of individual intactness, and the occasional (or frequent) intrusion of multi-storey blocks built in the 1960s and '70s, along with townhouses or apartment blocks of much more recent origin. Some retain original front fences, but many also do not.

Hammerdale Avenue is significant for its remarkable cohesion - that is, the individual houses are notably intact - most retaining their original front fences - and there is practically no post-war intrusion. In this regard, the precinct can be specifically compared with a number of specific streets in Elwood, namely Wimbledon Avenue, Monkstadt Street, Los Angeles Court and the eastern portion of Shelley Street, all of which display a similar

mix of notably intact single- and double-storey dwellings in various styles. All four of these streets, like Hammerdale Avenue, also contain a number of notable houses that are of significance in their own right, having been identified in heritage studies as individual places as well as part of a precinct.

Wimbledon Avenue represents a particularly pertinent comparison to Hammerdale Avenue, as it was also developed in the grounds of a Victorian mansion, resulting in a oddly-shaped street alignment with a curve at the far end; unlike Hammerdale Avenue, however, the original Victorian mansion still survives within the estate (at No 2 Wimbledon Avenue).

Statement of Significance:

What is Significant?

The Hammerdale Avenue Precinct comprises those houses in Hammerdale Avenue designated Nos 2-32 and 3-17, as well as the contiguous properties at 2-8 Jervois Street. This building fabric consists almost entirely of dwellings built during the 1930s, including detached and semi-detached single-storey houses, and double-storey duplexes or blocks of flats, in a variety of typical inter-War styles including Spanish Mission, Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival and Moderne.

How is it Significant?

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

Why is it Significant?

Subdivided in 1925 on the grounds of the *Hammerdale* mansion, the estate demonstrates a typical pattern of settlement during the inter-war period when large Victorian properties became less financially viable. The unusual dog-leg curvature of the avenue, where it joins the older Young and Jervois Streets, provides evidence of these origins, as does the tree at the rear of No 7, which is a remnant of the original landscaped mansion grounds.

Aesthetically, the housing, largely dating from the 1930s, represents a fine and intact collection of the diverse architectural styles of the period, including Spanish Mission, Moderne, Tudor Revival and Georgian Revival. A number of houses are of considerable aesthetic significance in their own right, including the fine California Bungalow at No 26, the Spanish Mission pair at 11-11A, the Moderne duplex at No 18, and the unusual *Carbeethon Flats* (with their distinctive triple-garage fronting Young Street) at No 17.

Recommendations: Buildings, and the mature tree at the rear of No 7, recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Table in the Port Phillip Planning Scheme.

Assessment: Simon Reeves, Heritage Alliance. June 2004.

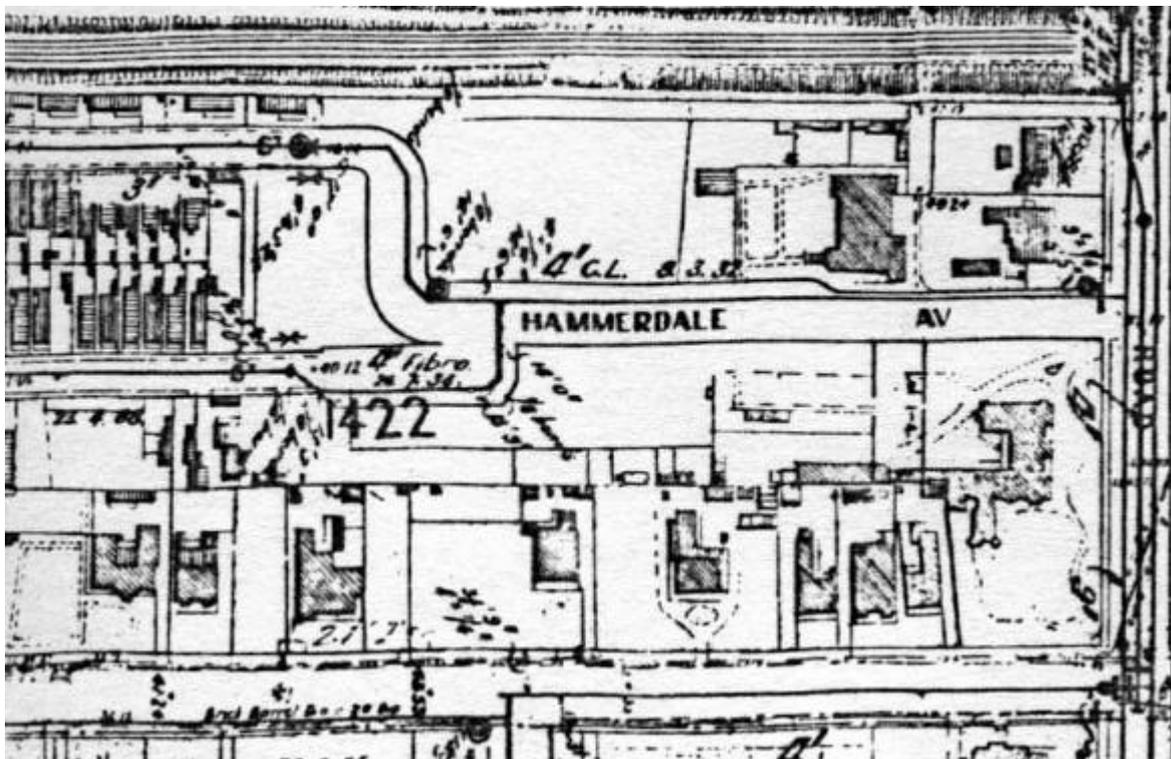
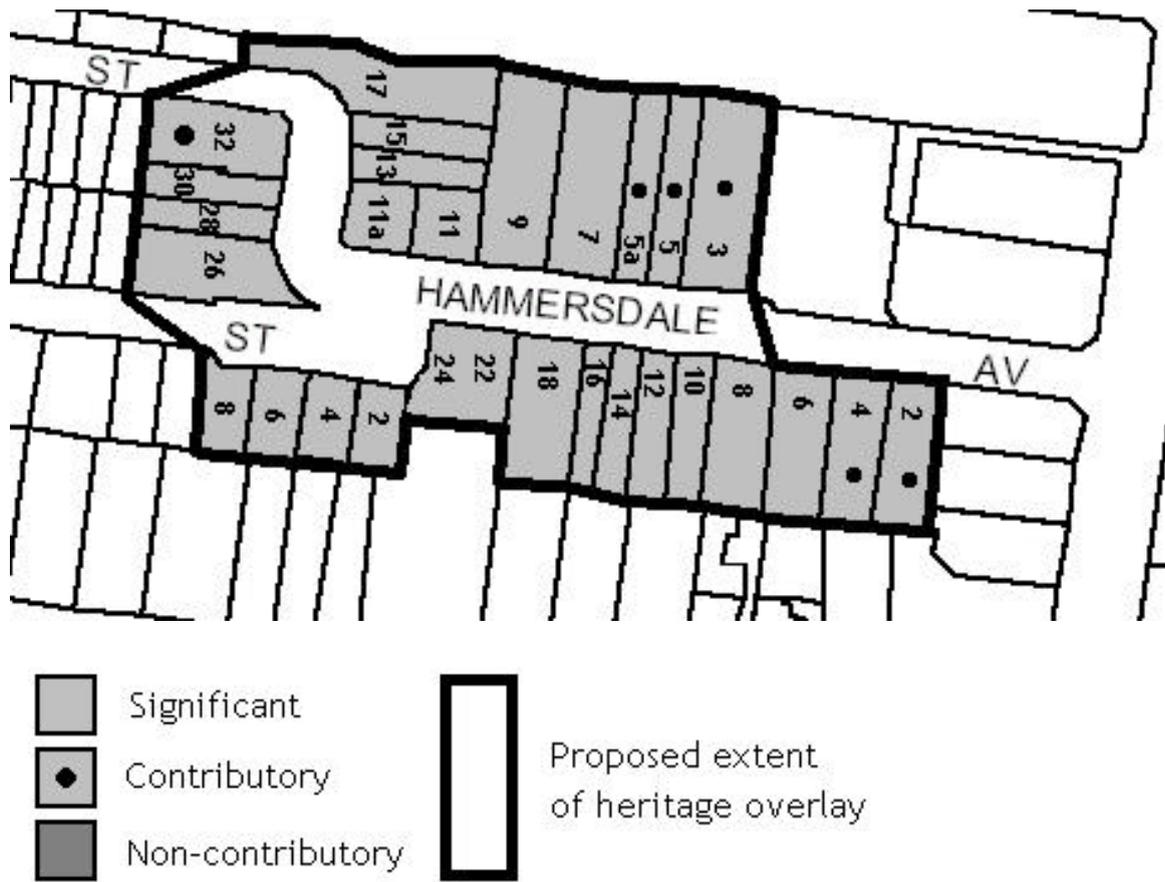


Figure 1 MMBW Plan No 46 (c.1903) showing former *Hammerdale* estate



Figure 2 *Hammerdale* (c.1868), home of prominent Melbourne auctioneer H M C Gemmell



Figure 3 Hammerdale Avenue prior to subdivision (from auction flyer, December 1925)



Figure 4 11-11a Hammerdale Ave (1932)



Figure 5 Triple garage at No 17 (c.1933)



Figure 6 Moderne duplex at No 18 (1939)



Figure 7 Detached bungalow at No 9 (1933)



Figure 8 House, rear of 1950s flats at No 3



Figure 9 Double-storey flats at Nos 4 and 6