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Our Ref: 2364 Boroondara Heritage Advice

Re: Nomination of Roseberry Street, Hawthorn East

Dear Rob,

Thank you for requesting a review of the Community Submission dated 29 July 2021 proposing inclusion of Roseberry Street, Hawthorn East, in the Heritage Overlay, potentially as part of HO841 Brickfields Environs Precinct.

This letter sets out the previous investigation of Roseberry Street as part of the Hawthorn East Heritage Gap Study in 2018, and then considers the questions raised and information provided in the Community Submission.

Heritage Gap Study investigation

The Hawthorn East Heritage Gap Study (the 'Gap Study') was carried out in two stages. In Stage 1 the entire suburb was surveyed by bicycle and on foot with individual properties and streetscapes identified for further investigation. This further investigation took place in Stage 2 of the Gap Study, at which point heritage citations were prepared for individual properties and precincts found to meet the threshold of local significance and recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay.

Roseberry Street was one of the streets identified in Stage 1 for further consideration due to its stock of Victorian houses. It was earmarked for further investigation as part of a larger precinct centred on the former Hawthorn Brickworks, owned by the Fritsch and Holzer families.

The initial rationale for further investigation of what was tentatively called the 'Brickworks housing precinct' was:

A close subdivision possibly related to the Fritsch Holzer Brickworks at its centre. Houses are mainly Victorian, with some Edwardian, and more interwar. If this whole development period can be shown to have been the primary housing for brickworks employees, it may be of historical significance.

During Stage 2, a draft history was prepared for the potential Brickworks Environs Precinct, with the following text regarding Roseberry Street:

The Grove Estate was subdivided into 81 lots fronting Auburn Grove, Garfield Street (later Roseberry Street) and Camberwell Road, which were auctioned in 1884. Not all the allotments sold, and another auction was held in 1885. ...

Originally named Garfield Street as part of the Grove Estate subdivision in 1884, Roseberry Street was in existence by 1905. The construction of houses in the street commenced in 1887 (numbers 68 and 70 were owned by the Fritsch family), with six houses built by Edward Heron and eight by Robert Lynch; by 1905, 41 homes had been built on the north side of Roseberry Street and 36 on the south of the street. Numbers 2 and 4 Roseberry Street were built in 1914 (McWilliam 2004:66; McWilliam 2007:8).

Houses at 40 and 42 Roseberry Street were built in the 1930s, and residences at 22, 24 and 55 in the 1940s (McWilliam 2007:8).

Following detailed, property-by-property survey of the potential precinct, Roseberry Street was found to be of a markedly lower intactness than other streets in the potential precinct. This was both in terms of intrusive new development breaking up groups of Victorian houses, particularly at the west end around Munro Street, and relatively low intactness of the majority of the Victorian houses (most have rebuilt front verandahs).

The project historian was then asked to undertake additional research to determine how closely Roseberry Street's development was linked with the Fritsch-Holzer's brickworks. It was thought that a very strong historical link, for example development of a substantial part of Roseberry Street to house brickworks employees, would overcome the lower level of intactness of the street.

No strong links for the street or a large part of the street, however, were identified in this further research. In the 1896 rate books one vacant block was owned by August Fritsch (on which houses at 82 & 84 were built prior to 1903) and one house was owned and occupied by brickmaker Henry Holzer (73 Roseberry Street). No other land or houses on Roseberry Street were owned by the Fritsch or Holzer family at that time, and no other 'brickmakers' were identified as owners or occupiers on the street. It was clear that this was not a grouping of "company housing" associated with the brickworks.

As there was no compelling link to the brickworks, though undoubtedly employees lived there over the decades, Roseberry Street was dropped from the potential precinct due to the lower level of overall intactness. In addition, no houses of potential individual significance were identified on this street.

New information provided by Community Submission

1. Number of potential Contributory properties

The Community Submission (p.2) notes that Roseberry Street 'contains approximately 47 heritage grade houses, mostly constructed in the 1880's and 1890's'. This is within a street that contains 92 properties, so the overall proportion of potentially Contributory properties is about 50 percent. Even if the modern development at the east end (85-87 & 80-96 Roseberry Street) were not included in a precinct or precinct extension, this would be 47 Contributory properties of a total 83 properties, so 57 percent in all. This is a far lower percentage of Contributory properties than seen in the current Brickfields Environs Precinct, demonstrating the reason that Roseberry Street was left out of the precinct. It is also lower than the rule-of-thumb for at least two-thirds Contributory/Significant properties in a heritage precinct.

The Community Submission (p. 6) notes that 10 houses on the street were identified as having heritage value in the 1993 Hawthorn Heritage Study. This is true, but all of them were given a preliminary "C"

grade, which is equivalent to a current “Contributory” grade. Under current Victorian planning regulations, properties of Contributory quality must be grouped together in a precinct of local significance before they warrant inclusion in the Heritage Overlay.

2. Property ownership by the Fritsch and Holzer families

The Community Submission contains research about property ownership by members of the Fritsch and Holzer families. This includes:

- 73 Roseberry Street – owned and occupied by Henry Holzer, a brickmaker and son of company founder. As noted above, this information was confirmed in Context’s original research into the history of the potential precinct. This house survives. It is a modest single-fronted timber house, part of a once-identical row at 69-75 Roseberry Street. No. 73 has been altered with the loss of its original windows, verandah cast-iron and possibly verandah posts. There is a photo of it in the Community Submission:



- Between 80 & 90 Roseberry Street – land owned by August Fritsch (either one of the founders or his architect son). As noted above, this information was confirmed in Context’s original research into the history of the potential precinct. Referring back to the 1896 ratebook entry and the 1903 MMBW Detail Plan (No. 1543), this land corresponds to 82 & 84 Roseberry Street. A semi-detached pair of dwellings had been constructed there by 1903, but both have since been demolished.
- 11 & 80 Roseberry Street – the Community Submission notes that ‘Other Holzer family members lived at 11 and 80 until the 1930’s and 1940’s at least’. Referring to Sands & McDougall’s Street directories, in 1910 only No. 73 was occupied by a Holzer (no Fritsches). In 1920 and 1930, John Holzer also resided at No. 11. In 1938, the resident at No. 11 was Mrs Emma Holzer. Through

this time period (1910-38), the resident listed at 80 Roseberry Street was a Mrs Clara Dixon. In 1942, however, she was replaced by Herbert Holzer, making two Holzers on the street at that time.

80 Roseberry Street has been demolished and replaced since then. The Victorian house at 11 Roseberry Street survives. It is very similar to No. 73, being a single-fronted timber cottage with alterations including non-original front verandah and front door (both are incorrect in form and detail), as well as a two-storey rear addition. It is shown in a RealEstate.com.au image from 2009:



- 88 Roseberry Street – the Community Submission notes that ‘The Fritsch Holzer Brick Company owned land at 88 Roseberry in 1968’. This may be the case, but it was long after the establishment period of the street and its built form. Note that there is a modern semi-detached house on this site constructed c1998, so it has no connection to the period of ownership by the Company.
- 58-60A Roseberry Street - the Community Submission notes information passed down from former to current long-term residents of the street that ‘the street was long known as a place that workers from the Fritsch Holzer Brickworks lived and that the brickworks company was involved with houses on the street; either via owning them, or providing them as accommodation for workers and managers’. They also stated that ‘Long term residents recall a group of Victorian weatherboard cottages’ that were owned by Council, and could have been owned by the Brick Company prior to that. These are 58-60A Roseberry Street, where all Victorian houses have been demolished and replaced.

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To conclude, the Community Submission has confirmed Context's earlier research: that there was ownership of a small number of properties on this street by members of the Fritsch and Holzer families, and one of them lived on the street during its foundational period (late 19th and early 20th century).

While the new research has revealed that one or two members of the Fritsch and Holzer families continued to reside on the street until at least the mid-20th century, no evidence has been found that there was systematic ownership and/or development of all or part of the street by the families or their company.

Furthermore, the only surviving house *built for* a Holzer (or Fritsch) is a very modest and altered house at No. 73. Holzers moved to the Victorian house at 11 Roseberry Street between 1910 and 1920, so this house was not built for them originally. It is similarly typical of its era and altered externally. All other houses identified as being owned or occupied by Fritsches or Holzers have been demolished.

There may have been more extensive property ownership by the Hawthorn Brick Company in the 20th century, but this would require much more research to confirm. It also raises the question of whether a gradual buy-up by the Company of existing properties in the 20th century would markedly add to the street's heritage significance. It would certainly be far less than if the Hawthorn Brick Company had actually *developed* all or part of the housing on the street.

Physical links between Roseberry Street and the brickworks

There are a number of questions raised and speculations made in the Community Submission about physical links between Roseberry Street and the brickworks. While Council's records from the time the Fritsch-Holzer Park was created on the former site of the brickworks could shed more light on these questions, they can be answered from other sources.

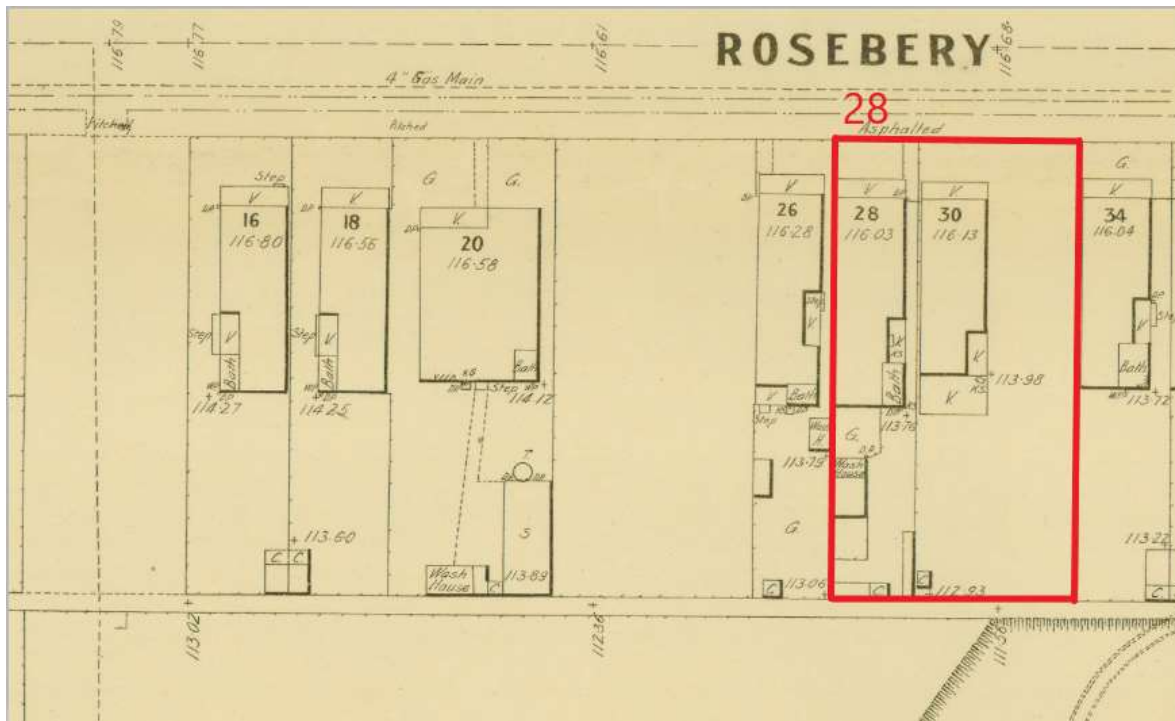
The Community Submission theorises that there were one or two historic entrances to the brickworks off Roseberry Street, which would provide a strong historical physical connection between the two. They posit that one may have been in the same place as the current pedestrian entrance to the Fritsch Holzer Park at 28 (or 28-32) Roseberry Street and/or 90-92 Roseberry Street.

MMBW plans from 1902 (No. 57) and 1903 (No. 1543) and an aerial photo (1945) have been examined to see if there was an entrance from Roseberry Street to the Brickworks, prior to conversion to a park.

1. 28-32 Roseberry Street

In 1903, this land was already developed with three houses, enclosed by fences. There was no formal or informal path to the Brick Works. Note that No. 32 backed directly onto the edge of the clay pit, so this would have been an extremely dangerous location for an entry. These properties are marked on the extract from MMBW Detail Plan No. 1543, on the following page. (NB: The house numbers on Roseberry Street have remained the same since this time).

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Moving forward in time, the 1945 aerial (below) shows that a house had been constructed in the side yard of No. 30 (now No. 32), and the houses at Nos 28 & 30 remained.



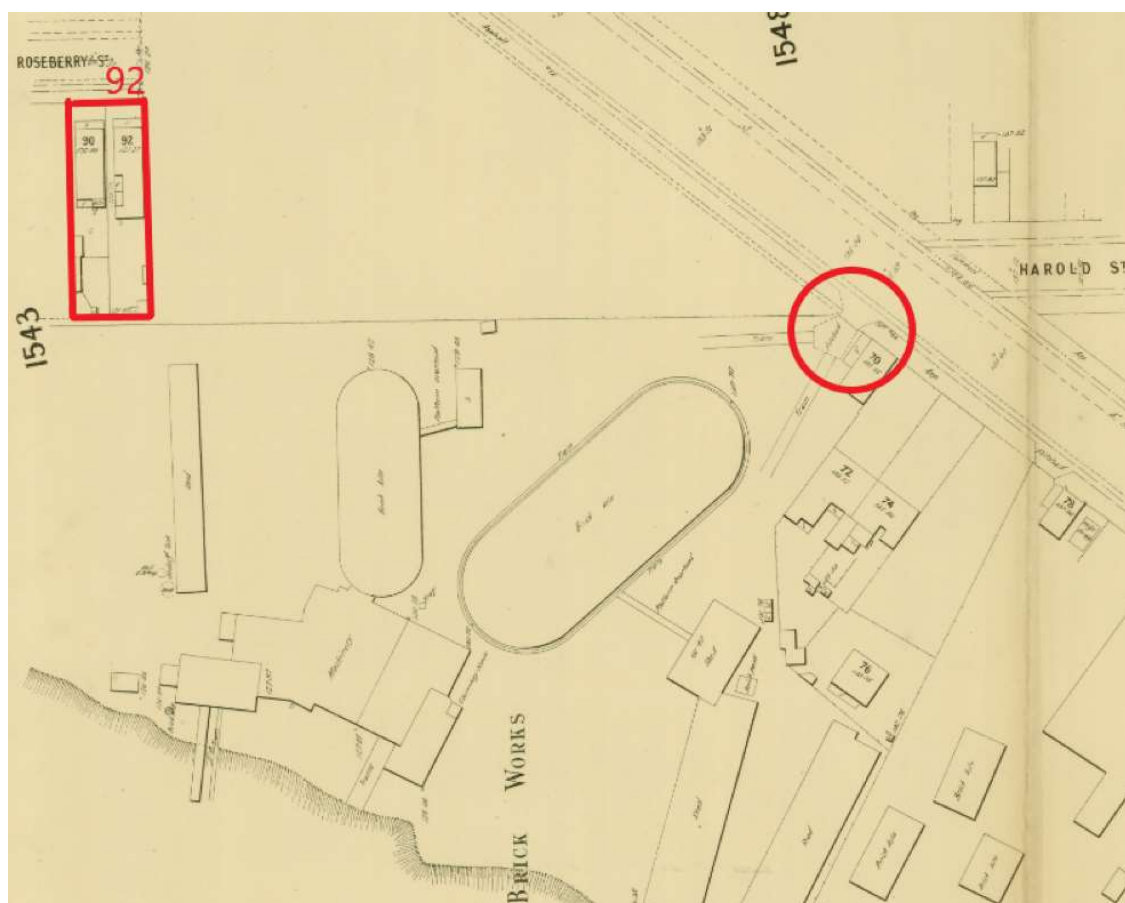
In summary, there is no evidence of an early link between Roseberry Street and the Brickworks at No. 28 or 28-32.

The submitters seem to have been confused by the vacant blocks shown on the 1903 MMBW Detail Plan, thinking that one of them corresponded to No. 28. (On page 38, they state: 'The current laneway into the FH park near number 26 would seem to correspond with one of these undeveloped areas shown' on the 1903 MMBW plan.) There is no evidence that these other vacant blocks provided an accessway to the Brickworks either. The land to the west (left) of 16 Roseberry Street became part of the Munro Street extension (by 1914), and the land at Nos. 22-24 Roseberry Street contains a c1940 semi-detached pair.

2. 90-92 Roseberry Street

The Community Submission also theorises that there was an accessway between 90 & 92 Roseberry Street.

In 1903, Roseberry Street did not yet extend to Camberwell Road, but halted in a dead end at 92 Roseberry Street. At this time, there were houses at 90 & 92 Roseberry Street (No. 92 survives), but vacant land at 86 & 88 Roseberry Street just to their west. As shown on MMBW Detail Plans 1543 and 1545, there were only two entrances to the brickworks at this time, one off the end of Bowler Street (then Fritsch Road) and the other off Camberwell Road, opposite the outlet to Harold Street. An excerpt from MMBW Detail Plan 1545, of 1903, is shown below, with the Camberwell Road entrance circled:



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The 1945 aerial shows a similar situation in regard to the two main entrances to the brickworks (off Bowler Street and Camberwell Road). There are houses present at 86-92 Roseberry Street.

By this time, Roseberry Street had been extended to Camberwell Road. The land that comprises today's 94-96 Roseberry Street appears to be part of the brickworks site, but it is separated from Roseberry Street by a line of trees or hedge (and presumably a fence to keep people out of this industrial site). This aerial shows a number of dirt tracks within the brickworks site, but none of them lead from Roseberry Street:



In conclusion, the current gap between 90 and 92 Roseberry Street, thought to be the location of a former accessway to the brickworks, was occupied by a house between at least 1903 and 1945. Furthermore, the 1903 plans and 1945 aerial have not indicated any accessways/paths at all between Roseberry Street and the brickworks.

Conclusions

It is agreed with the Community Submission that there have been connections between the Fritsch and Holzer families and some individual properties on Roseberry Street. Further research into title certificates would likely reveal several more owned by these prominent and well-off local families.

What has not been documented to any degree is the *participation* of the Fritsches, Holzers or their Hawthorn Brick Company in development of Roseberry Street, either its creation or construction of housing for themselves or workers. Only one surviving house appears to have been built as a Holzer family home (73 Roseberry Street), the others built for them have been demolished.

Furthermore, the “oral histories” positing that there were pedestrian or vehicular paths or accessways between Roseberry Street and the brickworks has not been borne out by any evidence. While it is possible that a

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brickworks employee could have gone out their back fence to the brickworks, this was not formalised, particularly as the south side of Roseberry Street sat at the edge of a deep clay pit.

In conclusion, no compelling evidence has been provided by the Community Submission to call into question the decision during the Hawthorn East Gap Study to exclude Roseberry Street from the proposed precinct. As discussed, this was due to its markedly lower overall level of intactness (particularly the percentage of potential Contributory properties) than other streets in the proposed precinct that have the same historical associations (informally linked to the brickworks) and a similar period of development (beginning in the 1880s).

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Natica Schmeder', written in a cursive style.

Natica Schmeder
Built Heritage Specialist