

Thornton Estate Residential Precinct Statement of Significance August 2020

Heritage Place:	Thornton Estate Residential Precinct	PS ref no:	HO806
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What is significant?

The Thornton Estate Precinct, which comprises 1-35 Thornton Street and 46-48 Stevenson Street, Kew, is significant. The Thornton Estate was subdivided in 1918. The houses were largely built between c.1920 and 1930, with the exception of 48 Stevenson Street, which may have been built c.1935-38.

The street plantings of uniformly spaced and pruned mature plane trees on the west side, and dense mature plantings on the east side. The lawn nature strip and concrete footpaths in the public domain contribute to the Precinct's significance.

The house, front fence, gateway and garden paths at 46 Stevenson Street is individually Significant. The Intact original front fence at 19 Thornton Street is contributory.

Non-original alterations and additions to the houses in the Precinct are not significant, including the second storey additions, garages, high brick front fences. Some of the front fences are sympathetic to the architectural style of the houses, but are not significant.

High brick front fences at 5 Thornton Street and lightweight modern palisade fences at 1 and 33 Thornton Street are not significant.

How is it significant?

The Thornton Estate is of local historic and architectural significance to the City of Boroondara.

Why is it significant?

The Thornton Estate Precinct is significant for its ability to demonstrate the continuing pattern of subdivision of large Victorian-era estates built along the south side of Studley Park Road, Kew, during the early interwar years. The Thornton Estate comprised 15 allotments subdivided from the former substantial home named Thornton. The subdivision remains legible because of the consistent streetscape character along its extent, created by the uniform and evenly planted street trees, lawn nature strips and early concrete footpath, and the consistency in architectural style of the houses (diverse forms of the interwar California Bungalow), set behind generally medium-height front fences in garden settings. (Criterion A)

Architecturally, the Thornton Estate Precinct is significant for the consistency of the architectural style of the houses, interwar California Bungalow. This is because the houses in the Thornton Estate were largely all built over a five-year time span, from c.1925-30; the exception may be 48 Stevenson, built c.1935-38. This distinguishes the Thornton Estate Precinct from other interwar precincts which were generally built over longer time spans and thus represent a greater diversity of architectural styles. Even though each house is built to very distinctive designs, they display features typical of the California Bungalow idiom, including visually prominent roofs, many with visually prominent street facing gables, flat top chimneys, some houses with shingling (19 Thornton and 48 Stevenson streets), heavy masonry verandah piers and balustrading, and projecting timber window frames, and geometric pattern leadlight glazing. (Criterion D)

Architecturally, 46 Stevenson Street is significant as an interwar Bungalow that exhibits many features typical of the interwar brick Bungalow style, a popular idiom for domestic architecture in the suburbs during the 1920s. Its significance is enhanced by the high degree of intactness of the house and its grounds (front fence, garden paths, gateway and gate) and the high quality of the detailing evident in these original features. The intactness of 46 Stevenson Street, and the integrity of the site as a whole, compares favourably with some of the best-known interwar landmark corner houses in Melbourne. (Criterion D)

The architectural significance of the Precinct is enhanced by the architectural quality and integrity of some of the contributory places. Some of the houses retain early and original front fences (46 and 48 Stevenson Street and 19 Thornton Street). (Criterion D)

Primary source

City of Boroondara Municipal Wide Heritage Gap Study Volume 4. Kew, Revised Report, 11 June 2020.

PRECINCT GRADINGS SCHEDULE

Name	Number	Street	Grading	Built Date
	1	Thornton Street	Contributory	c.1925
	3	Thornton Street	Non-contributory	
	5 to 11, 17 to 31	Thornton Street	Contributory	c.1925-30
	15	Thornton Street	Non-contributory	demolished
	33	Thornton Street	Non-contributory	c.1925-30, modified 1981
	35	Thornton Street	Non-contributory	1962
	46	Stevenson Street	Significant	c.1923-24
	48	Stevenson Street	Contributory	c.1935-38