

IDENTIFER MAUD STREET MAISONETTE PRECINCT			
Other/s			
Address	19-33a Maud Street 28-34a Maud Street BALWYN NORTH	Date/s	1938-40
Theme/s	6.3.3 Creating middle class suburbs 6.7.2 Making homes for the middle classes	Heritage Group	Residential Buildings (Private)
		Heritage Category	Residential Precinct
		Heritage status	-
Intactness	Good	Significance	Local
Condition	Good	Recommendation	Include in HO as a precinct
Significant: -			
Contributory: 19-19a, 21-21a, 23-23a, 27-27a, 28-28a, 29-29a, 30-30a, 31-31a, 33-33a and 34-34a <a href="#">MaudeMaud</a> Street			
Non-contributory: 25 and 32 <a href="#">MaudeMaud</a> Street; 10a Corhampton Road (rear 25 Maud Street)			
 <p>The map shows Maud Street between Hatfield Street and Aymer Street. A red outline indicates the extent of the precinct, covering lots 19-34. Green shading indicates contributory buildings, including lots 19, 19A, 21, 21A, 23, 23A, 27, 27A, 29, 29A, 31, 31A, 33, 33A, 28, 28A, 30, 30A, 34, and 34A. A red square indicates significant buildings, which are the same as the contributory buildings. Other lots shown include 10A, 25, and 32. A north arrow is located at the bottom right of the map area.</p>			
	Significant		Extent of precinct
	Contributory		North

## History

The development of this precinct can be traced back to 1913, when a huge tract of land at the south-eastern corner of Doncaster Road and Burke Road was subdivided to create a new 349-lot residential estate. As well as Doncaster and Burke road, these allotments fronted seven newly-formed internal thoroughfares: Nicholson Street, Hatfield Street, Corhampton Road, Aylmer Street and Severn (originally Grenville) Street running north-south, and Maylands Road and Maud Street running east-west. With the exception of some larger blocks fronting Doncaster Road and along both sides of Maud Street (where the surveyors were obliged to negotiate a large and jagged drainage easement), the estate was comprised of typical quarter-acre allotments, mostly in the form of narrow rectangles measuring 62 feet (18 metres) by 150 feet (45 metres) or thereabouts. However, the blocks along both sides of Maud Street were of stouter proportions, measuring 130 feet (39 metres) deep with street frontages of either 75 feet (22 metres) or 82 feet (25 metres).

The new subdivision was marketed as the *Tramway Estate*, with newspaper advertisements noting that it stood "right at the junction and intersection of two proposed electric tram routes which, when completed, should double the value of the land".<sup>1</sup> Although some of the allotments were sold at that time, there was virtually no new development on the estate thereafter - not least of all because the much-anticipated tramway, which had given the estate its name, would not be completed for another twenty-five years. However, after the electric tram terminus was finally extended to the corner of Doncaster and Burke Road in 1938, a boom of residential settlement followed.

Listings in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* reveal that the portion of Maud Street defined by this precinct developed rapidly, over a period of only a few short years in the late 1930s. The first houses appeared along the north side of the street, in the block between Hatfield Street and Corhampton Road. First recorded in the directory in 1938, these comprised two pairs of maisonettes at Nos 21-21a and 23-23a and a single detached dwelling at No 25. The first house on the house side of the street, also listed for the first time in 1938, was a single residence at No 32. By the following year, development along the north side had burgeoned to include two more pairs of maisonettes, at Nos 27-27a and 31-31a. By 1940, the blocks defined by the precinct had entirely filled out, with three further pairs of maisonettes on the north side (at Nos 19-19a, 29-29a and 33-33a) and three more on the south (Nos 28-28a, 30-30a and 34-34a).

The identities of the architects and/or builders of all these maisonettes have not yet been revealed. In October 1938, a building permit was issued for "brick villa flats" in Maud Street. The builder was listed as A Withers of Caulfield, and the owner as E T Norton of St Kilda Road. Directories confirm that a Mrs E T Norton resided at 34a Maud Street, which would infer the building permit referred to the pair at No 34-34a. The following March, another permit was issued for a "brick pair" in Maud Street, built by H Hedges of Kew for T D Lovell of Miami Street, Hawthorn. This evidently refers to the maisonettes at No 29-29a, half of which was occupied by Teresa Dolores Lovell and her husband Edgar.

The professions of these original residents, as recorded in electoral rolls, provide a useful overview of the comfortable middle-class milieu that populated the area at that time. Abraham Sicree (No 19) was a cigar manufacturer, while his next-door neighbour, Neil Town (No 19a), was a photographer. Others included a merchant, a manager, a company officer, a clerk, two electricians, a butcher and a tramways employee. Interestingly, most of the precinct's original residents lived there for only a few years; directory listings reveal that, by 1946, only one-third still remained, comprising Abraham Sicree (19a), Charles Cowdery (23), Mrs J Lawrence (25), Mrs J Andrew (28), Edgar Lovell (29a), Annie Weston (30) and Ian McDonald (32). In terms of their professions, the newcomers otherwise represented a continuation of the comfortable middle-class milieu evident in earlier times, with electoral rolls recording an assessor, a banker, a commercial traveller, a tailor, a radiographer, three managers and two engineers. There was evidently more stability during the post-war period, with the 1957 directory showing that more than half of the precinct's residents had been there for ten years or more. Of these, only five were original residents from the late 1930s: Abraham Sicree (19), Jean Andrews (28), Teresa Lovell (29a) and Ivan McDonald (32). Another decade thence, only Andrews and McDonald remained of the precinct's original residents.

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<sup>1</sup> *Argus*, 5 July 1913, p 16.

A notable resident of the precinct in the 1950s was artist John Brack (1920-1999), who lived at No 33 from 1952 to 1962. This period coincided with his emergence as an important modern painter in Melbourne, leading up to his appointment as head of the National Gallery's school in 1962. Not only did he complete some of his most well-known works while living in [MaudeMaud](#) Street, including *Collins Street 5pm* (1955), but he also recorded the character of his own suburb in a series of paintings with evocative titles such as *The Unmade Road* (1954), *Summer in the Suburbs* (1960), *View of an Outer Suburb* (1961) and *Segment of a Suburb* (1961). Brack also painted a depiction of the nearby Balwyn North Tram Terminus, not far from the western end of Maud Street. Most interestingly, he also produced several interior scenes that were inspired by (if not actually depicting) his own house at No 33. These include one entitled *The New House* (1953), which shows an embracing couple in front of an obviously Moderne-style fireplace, and a self-portrait (1955), showing Brack's reflection in a mirror in a tiled bathroom of the same period.

### Description and Integrity

With the exception of two non-contributory buildings of relatively recent origin, the Maud Street Maisonette Precinct consists entirely of single-storey inter-war brick dwellings in semi-detached pairs (maisonettes). All dating from the same period (ie the late 1930s), these paired houses are strikingly similar in many ways (eg form, scale, setback, fenestration, finishes and detailing), yet without any two examples being identical. Thus, by avoiding symmetry and repetition in the articulation of street frontages, each pair is expressed as a single freestanding residence in the suburban streetscape, belying the fact that each actually comprises two separate dwellings.

The maisonettes are all of brick construction, variously face brick (eg Nos 19-19a and 29-29a), face brick with roughcast render above the dado line (Nos 21-21a, 23-23a and 31-31a) or fully roughcast rendered with face brick highlights such as stringcourses, window surrounds or other feature (Nos 27-27a, 28-28a, 30-30a, 33-33a and 34-34a). The roofs, which are clad in Marseilles pattern terracotta tiles, are hipped, although a few examples (No 19a, 23-23a, 29a, 34-34a) incorporate flat gable ends. While the maisonettes differ in plan form, each is essentially based around a squat rectangular plan augmented by projecting bays to the front and/or rear. The commonest form is the U-shaped footprint-, which may either be symmetrical (Nos 23-23a, 31-31a) or asymmetrical (Nos 27-27a, 33-33a), with projecting bays facing the street (Nos 28-28a, 30-30a) or the rear (Nos 27-27a). A few example-s have an H-shaped footprint (Nos 29- 29a, 34-34a), with projecting bays to both front and rear, while one (No 19-19a) has unique Z-shaped footprint with a stepped triple-fronted facade. Each pair of maisonettes is set back from its Maud Street boundary by about eight or nine metres. Those properties with a single street frontage (ie not at the corners of Hatfield, Corhampton and Aylmer streets) have a narrow driveway at each end of the building. Some of the houses (eg Nos 21, 23a, 29a and 31a) still retain their original detached flat-roofed brick garages towards the rear of the block

Although displaying a strong sense of cohesion through comparable setbacks, roof forms, materials and finishes, the maisonettes otherwise exhibit considerable variety in facade treatments. Some facades are flat, or virtually flat (Nos 21-21a, 23-23a, 31-31a), while others are enlivened by the aforementioned projecting bays, which may be located at either end of the facade (Nos 28-28a, 30-3-a, 34-34a) or in the centre (Nos 27-27a, 33-31a). Entry porches take many different forms. In several cases, they are recessed into the side wall of the house (Nos 28, 29-29a, 30a, 31-31a, 34-34a), while those facing Maud Street are either recessed (Nos 21, 23-23a) or projecting (Nos 27a, 28a, 30, 33). The porches also exhibit a range of details indicative of the fashionable architectural styles of the era, such as plain brick pillars (No 21a), round-arched loggias (Nos 23-23a), rusticated piers (Nos 28s, 30), Tudor-style archways with corbelled gables (Nos 27-27a) and even cantilevered slab roofs (No 33-33a). Fenestration is fairly consistent, comprising large window bays with timber-framed double hung sashes in pairs, sometimes flanking a central fixed pane. Openings are variously enlivened with contrasting brick heads and sills, projecting jambs (No 34-34a), drip-moulds and corbelled sills (No 31-31a) or narrow projecting hoods (No 33-33a). Some windows contain multi-paned sashes, while a few have leadlight glazing (Nos 23-23a). A few of the houses along the north side of Maud Street also incorporate non-standard windows for decorative effect, such as the narrow slit window (No 21), the porthole window (No 21a), the Serlian window (Nos 23-23a) and pairs of small square windows (No 31-31a).

The precinct includes ~~a~~two non-contributory buildings erected on the only two sites originally occupied by single detached dwellings (Nos 25 and 32). The replacement buildings are sympathetic in scale, form and setback, with the one at No 32 (in fact a semi-detached pair, 32-32a) being a modern re-interpretation of the pre-war maisonette type.



*Street scape: southern side of Maud Street, looking east*



*Streetscape: northern side of Maud Street, looking east*



*Maisonette at No 19 (side entry)*



*Maisonette at No 21a*



*Maisonette at No 23a*



*Maisonette at No 27a*



*Maisonette at No 29a*



*Maisonette pair at Nos 30-30a*



*Maisonette pair at Nos 31-31a*



*John Brack's former residence at No 33*



*Maisonette pair at Nos 34-34a*

## Historical Context

The housing in this precinct is associated with the initial burst of residential settlement in this area, which was spurred by the extension of the electric tram route to Doncaster Road in 1938. The fact that all ten pairs of maisonettes - twenty dwelling in total - were completed within two years is indicative of the intensity of residential settlement in the area at that time.

## Comparative-analysis

Semi-detached interwar dwellings of this type are relatively unusual in the study area. A few isolated examples exist elsewhere in Maud Street; there are two pairs to the west of the precinct at Nos 15-15a and 16-16a, and a third pair further east, at Nos 38-38a. Other examples can be found in the immediate vicinity, including individual pairs at 4-4a Severn Street and 10-10a Maylands Road, and two adjacent pairs at 7-7a and 9-9a Highbury Street. There are also examples located on corner allotments, where the secondary street frontage provides sufficient depth required for the construction of maisonettes, as in the case of the maisonettes at 145 Balwyn Road (corner Grosvenor Parade). Other examples are recorded in Balwyn, including two pairs at 14-14b and 16-16b Austin Street (which form part of the Austin Street Precinct, qv)

Although individual pairs of maisonettes such as these can be found scattered across the study area, only one other example has been identified where they exist in a larger group. This is located in Head Street, Balwyn, where there are seven pairs of maisonettes at Nos 4-4a, 6-6a, 10-10a, 12-12a, 14-14a, 16-16a and 18-18a, plus another two just around the corner on Burke Road, at Nos 1024-1024a and 1026-1026a. There is also a single dwelling at 8 Head Street which represents the surviving half of another original maisonette pair; its partner (No 8a) having been demolished and replaced by a new detached town-house. The maisonettes themselves are very similar to those in Maud Street in terms of construction, roof form, articulation detailing and finishes. However, they do not combine to form a comparably cohesive streetscape, as, while the houses themselves are generally externally intact (with a few exceptions), their settings have been considerably altered by the reconfiguration of front gardens, and particularly, by the enlargement of driveways to create additional off-street parking (eg at Nos 4, 6a, 8, 10 and 16).

## Assessment against Criteria

Associated with intense residential development of the area after the extension of the tram route in 1938 (*Criterion A*)

Pairs of inter-war semi-detached houses are extremely unusual in the study area (*Criterion B*)

A large collection of these unusual dwellings, exhibiting cohesion in form, scale, setback and materials (*Criterion E*)

## Grading and Recommendations

The Maud Street Precinct is a significant heritage area in the City of Boroondara.

## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The Maud Street Precinct comprises ten pairs of single-storey semi-detached brick maisonettes, which display consistency in their scale, setback, materials and overall expression, but otherwise display variety in their contrasting materials (face brick vs rendered brick), roof forms (hipped vs gabled), facade articulation (symmetrical vs asymmetrical) and stylistic detailing (Tudor Revival vs Moderne vs Classical influences). The maisonettes (comprising a total of ten separate dwellings) were all erected within a relatively brief period of time, between 1938 and 1940.

### *Why is it significant?*

The precinct is of historical, architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Boroondara

### *How is it significant?*

Historically, the precinct is significant for associations with the intense phase of residential settlement that took place in this part of the study area after the expansion of the electric tram network, which was extended to nearby Doncaster Road in 1938. The specific provision of semi-detached maisonettes along [MaudeMaud](#) Street, within short walking distance of the then newly-opened tram terminus, is indicative of a serious attempt to provide higher density living in a municipality that had actively discouraged the construction of residential flats in the pre-war era.

In its own right, the maisonette at No 33 is of some historic interest as the former home of painter John Brack, who, during his decade of residence from 1953 to 1962, recorded the expanding suburbia of Balwyn and Balwyn North in a series of highly evocative paintings, as well as a depiction of the nearby tram terminus and at least two paintings that were inspired by (if not actually depicting) his own house in Maud Street.

Architecturally the precinct is significant as a notable and substantially intact enclave of semi-detached inter-war housing (in the specific form of maisonettes), which is a type of dwelling not well represented in the study area. Although a small number of scattered examples are known to have been built in both Balwyn and Balwyn North, they remain highly unusual, and it is extremely rare to find them in any great numbers in a single area of streetscape. Maud Street remains as the ~~the~~ larger and more intact of only two such examples in the study area (the other being located in Head Street, Balwyn, which was similarly located just off the newly-extended electric tramway route)

Aesthetically, the precinct is significant as a cohesive streetscape of late inter-war dwellings that exhibit a particularly consistent expression in terms of their semi-detached form, brick construction, low roof-lines, common setback and general articulation of facades with large picture windows and asymmetrical entry porches. At the same time, the paired houses express a lively sense of individuality through their contrasting facade articulation (eg porches variously projecting or recessed, with arches, lintels or columns), window surrounds (eg sills, heads, quoined jambs), finishes (eg different permutations of face brickwork with rendered highlights, or vice versa) and detailing (eg circular windows), which reflects a range of fashionable styles of domestic architecture of the late 1930s, including Tudor Revival, Moderne and Classical Revival. The distinctive pre-war character of the precinct is enhanced by the retention of original low brick walls across street boundaries and, in several cases, original detached garages set well back to the rear.

### **Identified by**

Built Heritage Pty Ltd

### **References**

Lodged Plan 6,120 (dated 12 July 1913).