



9 Bridge Road, Barwon Heads

Heritage Values Review

May 2016

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction	
1.1	Purpose	1
1.2	Location	1
1.3	Methodology	1
2	Site Details	
2.1	Introduction	2
2.2	Historical Overview	2
2.3	Description	8
3	Comparative Analysis	
3.1	Pre-1900 houses in Barwon Heads	10
3.2	Observations	13
4	Review of Heritage Significance	
4.1	Introduction	14
4.2	Discussion	14
4.3	Conclusion	14
Appendix A		
Photograph c.1895		
Appendix B		
Heritage Overlay Map		

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an independent review of the heritage values of 9 Bridge Road, Barwon Heads (subject site). There is a current planning application for the subject site proposing the complete demolition of the extant 19th century house and its replacement with a three storey mixed-use building.

This report has been prepared by RBA Architects + Conservation Consultants on behalf of the Barwon Heads Association as part of a submission to Greater Geelong City Council seeking interim heritage controls for the subject site (including both the house and the cypress tree).

1.2 Location

The subject site is located on the south side of Bridge Road, at the west corner of its intersection with Hitchcock Avenue.



Aerial of subject site
(Source: Nearmap, showing December 2015)

1.3 Methodology

In preparing this report, the following has been undertaken:

- A site inspection from the street,
- Historical research regarding the subject site and Barwon Heads more generally,
- Comparative analysis with other sites in Barwon Heads protected by the Heritage Overlay,
- Review of the subject site's heritage values with regard to the 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' Practice Note (Dept. of Planning and Community, revised 2012).

2 SITE DETAILS

2.1 Introduction

This section of the report provides some historical information regarding Barwon Heads and the subject site, and a description of the existing site conditions as a basis for commenting upon its heritage value.

2.2 Historical Overview

2.2.1 Barwon Heads

The following description of the early development of Barwon Heads is taken from the Environmental History.

The first land was sold in 1871 in one and two acre lots, but there was no rush to purchase – there were only two buyers, both local farmers who bought six and ten acres respectively. There were further sales in 1885, 1886 and 1890; this time the buyers were mainly well known Geelong business men. Many of these sold to other Geelong identities, some of whom began building houses on their land e.g. Howard Hitchcock, of Bright & Hitchcocks department store, who built a house in 1886. But it was a company that got Barwon Heads on the move – the Barwon Heads Estate Company Limited; it bought some of the land already sold as well as a considerable area north of the original area. The latter it subdivided, laid out several streets, and sold, mostly to Geelong buyers.¹

The township developed largely as a destination for holiday makers and picnickers. In 1889 a coffee palace was built and a park established. A post and telegraph office offered a daily mail service to Geelong and in 1890 a coach service commenced. A jetty, recreation hall and hot and cold sea baths were constructed. Boat houses standing side by side were erected on the sand. By 1891 a general store was opened, a Methodist church was established and there were a total of 16 houses. An 1892 Tourist's Guide gives the following favourable description of Barwon Heads:

In giving a description of this locality, there is a difficulty in compressing all the interesting features, which nature and art have combined to make it one of the most desirable to visit. The writer has heard more than one visitor declare that it is the best and healthiest seaside place in Victoria. The purity of the atmosphere, the close proximity to both ocean and river, and the facilities for boating and fishing, certainly make it a great favourite with many people.

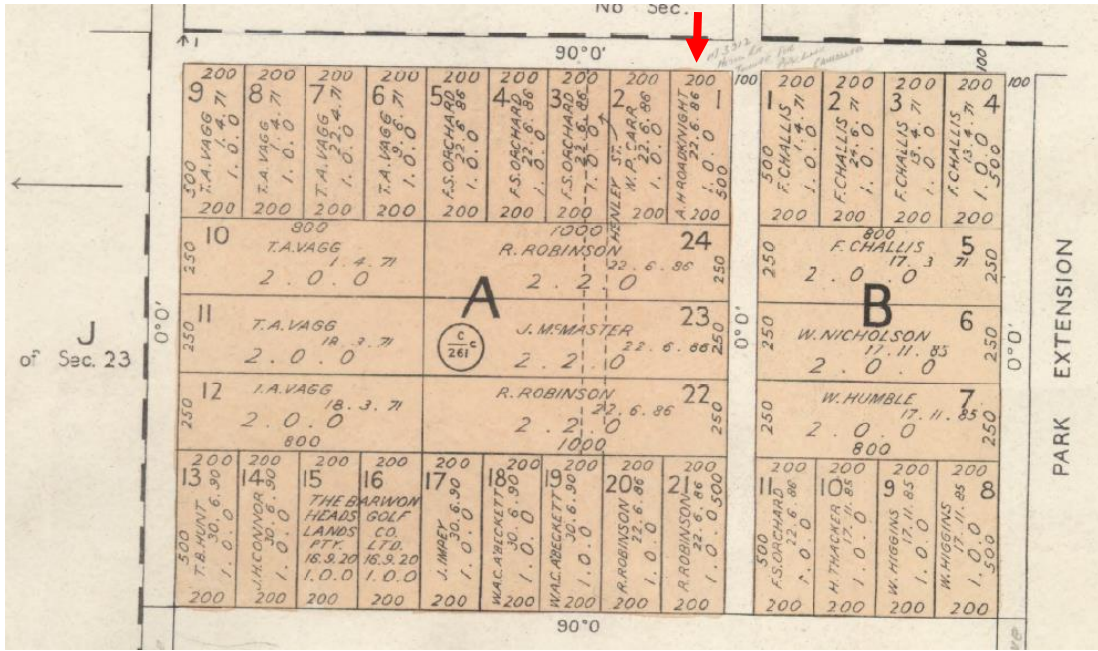
The township is laid out on the lakeside of the peninsula, and comprises some very pretty cottages and villas, chiefly owned by residents of Geelong.²

2.2.2 Subject Site

Pre-1900 Phase

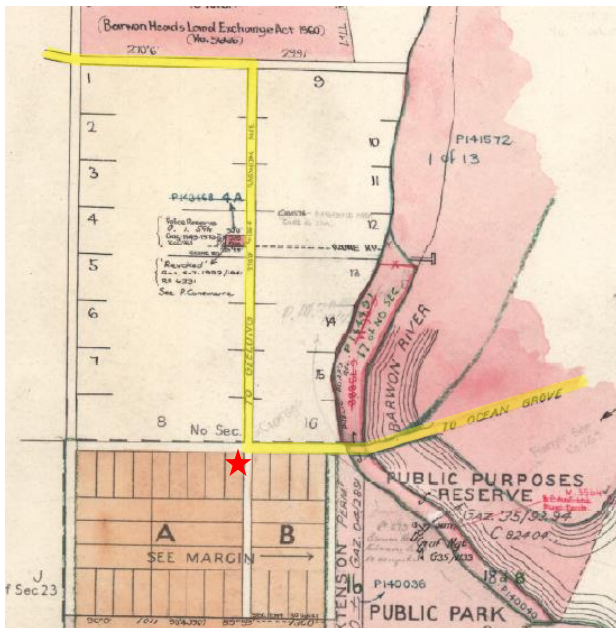
The township plan shows that the subject site formed part of Allotment 1 Section A, a one acre parcel of land which was purchased by Alfred Hill Roadknight (a well-known Geelong valuer and estate agent) for £27 on 22 June 1886.³ Currently the subject parcel of land represents about one quarter of the original one acre allotment.

¹ Authentic Heritage Services, *City of Greater Geelong Outer Areas Heritage Study*, Vol.2 Environmental History, 2000, pp15-17
² M L Hutchinson (publisher), *The Tourists' guide to Geelong and the southern watering places on the bay and coast and popular holiday resorts*, 1892(?), p32
³ Original Crown Grant, Vol.2067 Fol.413222



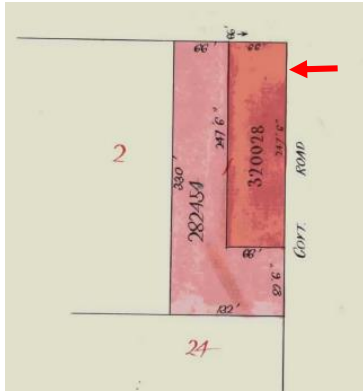
Extract from the Township Plan for Barwon Heads. Allotment 1 of Section A is indicated. (Source: Public Record Office Victoria)

The allotment was located on a prominent corner site at the southern end of the main street and on the route linking Barwon Heads with Geelong and Ocean Grove. This remains a prominent location today.



Extract from the Township Plan for Barwon Heads. The star indicates the location of the subject site, and the route between Ocean Grove and Geelong via Barwon Heads is marked in yellow. (Source: Public Record Office Victoria)

Ownership of the allotment was transferred to Albert James Derrick (architect, Geelong) and John Alexander Dawson (electrician, Geelong) on 11 December 1888, who subdivided the allotment selling the western portion in August 1890 and retaining the eastern portion (which contained the subject land) until 1892 (refer diagram below). The 1890 rate book records A J Derrick and J A Dawson as owning a weatherboard cottage – this is likely to be a reference to the subject house, and as such could be the design of its architect owner A J Derrick who was a prolific Geelong based architect who designed many houses and several churches in the area.



From the Titles Office Record of Subdivision. The subject site formed part of the corner block indicated (it has since been truncated at the southern end).

(Source: Vol. 2067 Fol. 413222)

On 13 April 1892, ownership was transferred to Joseph Gell (tailor, Geelong). The house appears in the c.1895 photograph below.



'View of Barwon Heads looking south about 1895.' The Cobb & Co. stables can be seen the foreground. Refer appendix for full photograph. The subject house is indicated in the background.

(Source: copy held at Geelong Heritage Centre, 2009/01847/012)

On 7 January 1901, ownership passed to William Charles Thomas (miller, Murtoa). William Charles Thomas was the founder of W C Thomas & Sons, a prominent and successful flour milling company in Victoria.⁴ A Thomas family history compilation records that family members enjoyed holidays at their Barwon Heads retreat from about 1899 onwards (although the certificate of title records that he did not own the property until 1901).

William and Elizabeth...created a holiday retreat at the seaside settlement of Barwon Heads, where they and their small children could sometimes escape the fierce heat of the summers in "up country" Victoria. Here all members of the family enjoyed holidays from about 1899 onwards and the original house was, until 1992, still in the possession of members of the family. From 1908 onwards the house was in even greater demand with all the family much closer to hand and in fact one son, Arthur, purchased a nearby house at Barwon heads for his own use.⁵

W C Thomas appears in the rate book for 1902, where it is recorded that he owned a house and boatshed.⁶

The c.1900 photograph below shows that originally the house, known to the Thomas family as 'The Cottage', only had one projecting gable end (west side). The front verandah had a striped roof and there was a double hung sash window either side of the centrally located entrance. It is possible that the verandah posts at this time may have been cast iron (difficult to determine from the photograph). The gable end featured a finial and vertical slatted timber detailing, and a window with sliding shutters. There were two chimneys, one to the west side and a central one to the rear. The

⁴ William C Thomas had mills in Beaufort (1870), Murtoa (1876), Warracknabeal (1887), Rainbow, Beulah, Minyip, Ballarat, and Newport (1904). By the 1890s, the flour was being exported to the UK, South Africa and various Asian countries. W C Thomas was an early adopter of the eight hour day in the milling industry. He was also a Councillor and later President of the Shire of Ripon, as well as being a lay preacher of the Methodist Church. He died on 19 October 1919. (C.W.Coates and M.L.Burrows (nee Thomas), *The Thomas Family of Illogan, Cornwall and Beaufort, Victoria*, 1985 + 2007)

⁵ C.W.Coates and M.L.Burrows (nee Thomas), *The Thomas Family of Illogan, Cornwall and Beaufort, Victoria*, 1985 + 2007, p9

⁶ The subject site was not able to be identified in rate books prior to 1902.

photograph also shows timber picket fencing and established hedging and shrubs which are not evident in the earlier c.1895 photograph.



'The Cottage' c.1900. Note the fencing and established hedging and shrubs.
(Source: CW Coates & M L Burrows (nee Thomas), *The Thomas Family of Illogan, Cornwall and Beaufort, Victoria*, p9)

The c.1895 photograph above and the 1912 plan below show that the subject site was conveniently positioned opposite the Cobb & Co. stables and the general store.



Complete Plan of Barwon Heads, revised by Thomas Roadknight & Co dated 22 October 1912. The subject site and the Thomas' boatshed are indicated with arrows. The Cobb & Co stables and the general store are marked with stars.
(Source: State Library of Victoria)

Early 20th Century Phase

Alterations were undertaken to the house over the course of the 20th century. Various Thomas family photographs taken over the period c.1930-1959 (reproduced below) illustrate the changes.

Sometime between 1900 and 1930 (more likely to have been 1900s-1910s than the 1920s) the house was enlarged on the east side with the introduction of another gable end matching that to the west side. The entrance was relocated

from its central position to the eastern end of the verandah, and a window replaced the former door opening. It is possible that the frieze and posts to the verandah may have been replaced at this time.



c.1930. The introduced gable end is on the left. The relocated entrance is indicated by an arrow.
(Source: Thomas Family)



c.1933
(Source: Thomas Family)



c.1935
(Source: Thomas Family)



April 1936, prior to the alteration to the verandah.
(Source: State Library of Victoria, H91.160/606)

In about 1937, the front verandah was extended forward of the gable ends and enclosed with weatherboards to the lower part and slightly arched window openings, most likely fitted with flyscreens, to the upper part (this was probably a sleep-out, a common feature of the Interwar period for its healthful benefits). The entrance was through the front of the enclosed verandah.



c. 1939. Note the extended and enclosed verandah.
(Source: Thomas Family)

During the 1940s the windows to the gable ends were replaced with tripartite windows with double hung sashes at the sides. Further changes were also made to the verandah with the entrance relocated to the east end and glass windows fitted to the western part of the verandah (two of the earlier flyscreen openings were retained to the eastern part). A pair of young cypress trees in the front yard are evident in photographs of this time.



1940s. Note the new windows to the gable ends. Two young cypress tree are visible in the front yard. (Source: Thomas Family)



1955. Note the glass windows to the western part of the verandah. (Source: Thomas Family)

Recent Decades

In 1992, ownership of the subject site passed out of the Thomas family. The house acquired the name 'Honnington' and it was run as a bed & breakfast and more recently as a holiday rental house. Alterations have included the introduction of a timber deck to the front of the house which is accessed through new french doors to the enclosed verandah.

2.3 Description

The single storey weatherboard house is centrally positioned on the highest part of the site. The land slopes downwards at the front and the rear of the property. The front yard is enclosed by a low timber fence (not the original, but sympathetic) which sits atop a bluestone retaining wall (dating to the mid-late 20th century) along the front boundary. In the front yard there is a large cypress tree (one of a pair planted c.1940).

The front elevation is comprised of two gable ends (west gable original, east gable early 20th century) either side of an enclosed verandah (enclosed c.1937) which projects about half a metre forward. The gable ends retain their original slatted timber detailing and worked timber finials (replaced c.late 20th century – 1950s photo shows east finial broken). The windows to the the gable ends, introduced during the 1940s, are tripartite with sashes to the side sections and replaced earlier windows in the same location with sliding timber shutters. The roof is clad in corrugated sheet metal (like original). The rendered chimney located to the rear (although visible from the front) is original and retains a pair of terracotta chimney pots. It appears that the second chimney to the west side no longer remains. A modern deck has been introduced to the front of the house with a low timber balustrade.



Front

(Source: <https://aura.travel/accommodation/vic/barwon-heads/honnington-on-bridge.html>)



Large cypress tree in front yard

To the rear there is a skillion/flat roofed section which may have been an addition or modified. The gable end remains exposed to the west. There is a freestanding timber outbuilding and a carport. The rear has some visibility from Hitchcock Avenue over the timber paling fence.



Rear of the house







Rear of the house



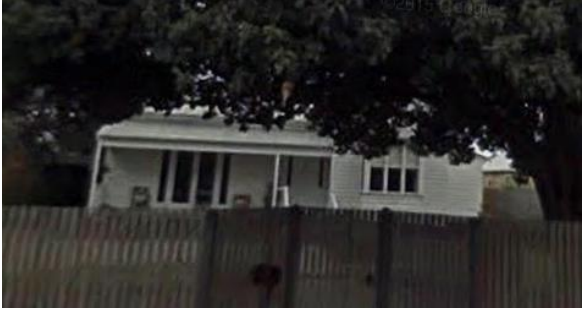

3 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

3.1 Pre-1900 houses in Barwon Heads

The following table outlines the nine pre-1900 houses that were identified in Stage 2 of the Greater Geelong Outer Areas Heritage Study (GGOAHS) and which are currently protected by heritage overlays either individually or within the Flinders Heritage Area (HO1649). It is noted that in addition to the subject site, there may be other 19th century houses which have not been identified and/or protected. Refer to Appendix B for Heritage Overlay map.

Description	Image
<p>18 Ewing Blyth Drive Built c.1886-1890 Altered 1977, and post-2000 Integrity (according to GGOAHS): Fair Weatherboard house, corrugated sheet metal roof, 2 early chimneys, return verandah. Alterations include a skillion addition and a 2 storey rear addition. Almost entirely concealed by vegetation.</p> <p>Included in Flinders Heritage Area (HO1649)</p>	 <p>(Source: Google Maps)</p>
<p>33 Flinders Parade Built 1891 Altered 1893, 1922-23 Integrity (according to GGOAHS): Good Substantial weatherboard guesthouse, return verandahs, corrugated sheet metal roof. Alterations include substantial 19th century additions, the verandah and loss due to fire damage. Partly concealed by vegetation (front views).</p> <p>Included in Flinders Heritage Area (HO1649)</p>	 <p>(Source: Google Maps)</p>
<p>39 Flinders Parade Built 1890-91 Altered 1912, c.1990 Integrity (according to GGOAHS): Fair Weatherboard house, early chimneys, bay windows, shingling to gable ends, projecting flat roofed verandah with worked timber posts and frieze. Alterations include prominent c.1990 second storey gable addition with balcony. Substantial Norfolk pine trees at front. Entirely concealed by vegetation.</p> <p>Included in Flinders Heritage Area (HO1649)</p>	 <p>(Source: Google Maps)</p>

Description	Image
	 <p data-bbox="831 546 1007 577">(Source: GGOAHS)</p>
<p data-bbox="284 589 485 618">8 Grandview Parade</p> <p data-bbox="284 629 395 658">Built c.1891</p> <p data-bbox="284 669 564 698">Dates of alterations unknown</p> <p data-bbox="284 710 655 739">Integrity (according to GGOAHS): Fair</p> <p data-bbox="284 750 778 936">Weatherboard house, corrugated sheet metal roof, gable end to front with shingling and ventilator, finials, front skillion roofed verandah, multi-paned windows. Alterations include verandah details, chimney, recent windows to side, rear lean-to extension, freestanding garage.</p> <p data-bbox="284 947 464 976">Visible from street.</p> <p data-bbox="284 1025 719 1055">Included in Flinders Heritage Area (HO1649)</p>	 <p data-bbox="831 875 1038 904">(Source: Google Maps)</p>
<p data-bbox="284 1077 448 1106">1 Margate Street</p> <p data-bbox="284 1117 395 1146">Built c.1875</p> <p data-bbox="284 1158 501 1187">Altered 1918-19, 1978</p> <p data-bbox="284 1198 655 1227">Integrity (according to GGOAHS): Fair</p> <p data-bbox="284 1238 799 1391">Weatherboard house, corrugated sheet metal hipped roof, concave front verandah. Alterations include aluminium framed windows, verandah posts, and the removal of a substantial pine tree in the front (post-2000).</p> <p data-bbox="284 1402 564 1431">Relocated to site in 1918-19.</p> <p data-bbox="284 1442 464 1471">Visible from street.</p> <p data-bbox="284 1520 719 1550">Included in Flinders Heritage Area (HO1649)</p>	 <p data-bbox="831 1413 1038 1442">(Source: Google Maps)</p>
<p data-bbox="284 1574 437 1603">19 Ozone Road</p> <p data-bbox="284 1615 395 1644">Built c.1890</p> <p data-bbox="284 1655 517 1684">Altered 1918-19, c.1940</p> <p data-bbox="284 1695 655 1724">Integrity (according to GGOAHS): Poor</p> <p data-bbox="284 1736 778 1823">Weatherboard house, corrugated sheet metal roof, return verandah, early chimney. Has been substantially altered and extended.</p> <p data-bbox="284 1834 564 1863">Relocated to site in 1918-19.</p> <p data-bbox="284 1874 464 1904">Visible from street.</p> <p data-bbox="284 1953 719 1982">Included in Flinders Heritage Area (HO1649)</p>	 <p data-bbox="831 1888 1038 1917">(Source: Google Maps)</p>

Description	Image
<p>11 Grove Road Built c.1890 Alterations 1916-17, c.1973 Integrity (according to GGOAHS): Fair Weatherboard house, corrugated sheet metal gable roof, concave verandah. Alterations include chimney (c.1916), two storey rear additions, possibly front windows. Apparently relocated to site 1916-17. Visible from street.</p> <p>Individual Heritage Overlay (HO1676)</p>	 <p>(Source: Google Maps)</p>
<p>31 Ozone Road Built c.1890 Altered 1918-1919 Integrity (according to GGOAHS): Fair Weatherboard house, corrugated sheet metal gable roof, skillion front verandah, timber finials. Alterations include chimneys (c.1918), verandah posts and brackets. Apparently relocated to site 1918-19. Visible from street.</p> <p>Individual Heritage Overlay (HO1695)</p>	 <p>(Source: Google Maps)</p>
<p>29 Seaview Avenue Built c.1891 Altered 1977 Integrity (according to GGOAHS): Fair Weatherboard house, parallel gable roof forms with corrugated sheet metal, projecting gable end to front, front verandah, chimney. Alterations include, verandah posts, aluminium framed sliding windows. Partly obscured from street – large trees</p> <p>Individual Heritage Overlay (HO1700)</p>	 <p>(Source: Google Maps)</p>  <p>(Source: GGOAHS)</p>

3.2 Observations

Some observations regarding these nine houses include:

- All of the nine pre-1900 houses have undergone alterations and additions, such that their integrity has been reduced to varying degrees.
- The heritage study rated the integrity of each house as being either Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Partially Excavated or Fully Excavated. Seven of the houses were given a rating of 'fair', one was 'good' and one was 'poor'. All three of the houses with an individual HO were only assessed as being of 'fair' integrity.
- As many as four of the nine houses were relocated to their current site in the 1910s. It is possible that these houses originated outside of Barwon Heads.
- Several of the houses are largely concealed from view by vegetation.

4 REVIEW OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Introduction

Council have advised that the subject site had been identified in Stage 1 of the Outer Areas Heritage Study. It was originally to form a locally significant dwelling as part of a much larger proposed Flinders Heritage Area heritage overlay that included much of central Barwon Heads. During Stage 2 of the Heritage Study however, the Flinders Heritage Area was revised to a much smaller heritage area apparently due in part to a lack of community support and alterations to a number of the buildings. A number of places which were considered of sufficient integrity were proposed for individual heritage overlays, while others, including the subject site, did not proceed as a consequence of alterations to their appearance.

It is possible that details of the house's early construction were not understood at this time.

4.2 Discussion

The subject house is likely to have been built c.1890 during the first major wave of development in Barwon Heads and as such is amongst the earliest surviving houses in the town. During the period 1888-1892 the subject site was owned by prolific Geelong based architect Albert J Derrick, and as such he may have been responsible for the design. The site formed part of Allotment 1 Section A which was part of the original township. It is noted that there is currently only one 19th century house within the extent of the original township plan which is protected by a heritage overlay (18 Ewing Blyth Drive).

Arguably, the subject house is the most prominent 19th century house in the town, being located on a corner block at the southern end of the main street. It has landmark qualities particularly when considered together with the large cypress (70-80 years old) which is evocative of early beachside development.

Although the house has undergone alterations, it retains design features of its original late Victorian style including the gabled roof form, the original rendered chimney with terracotta chimney pots, timber slatted screens and finials to the gable ends, corrugated sheet metal roof cladding (not original fabric) and weatherboard wall cladding. It is noted that unlike a number of other 19th century houses in Barwon Heads which were relocated to their current site in the 20th century, the subject house has remained on its original site.

Like many of the other 19th century houses (and early 20th century houses) in Barwon Heads the subject house has been enlarged and modified over time. The introduction of a second gable at the east end was a relatively early alteration (likely 1900s-1910s) and is in keeping with the house's Victorian period origins in form and detailing. The enclosed verandah (c.1937), whilst not optimal, can be readily interpreted as an alteration and maintains a verandah-like space. The verandah was most likely enclosed as a sleep-out which was a popular practice during the Interwar period for health reasons in keeping with medical theory of the time. Although the subject house has undergone alterations, it is considered that it has an integrity comparable with the group of 19th century houses currently protected by a Heritage Overlay (refer section 3 of this report).

It is fortunate in this instance that clear photographic documentation survives of the house's earlier appearance (the 20th century photographs in particular), such that the missing details and configuration of the verandah and the windows to the gable ends could potentially be reconstructed to an earlier appearance.

The house has a strong association with the Thomas Family, being in their ownership from 1901 until 1992. William Charles Thomas, who purchased the house as a family holiday retreat, was the founder of W C Thomas & Sons, a prominent and successful milling company in Victoria.

4.3 Conclusion

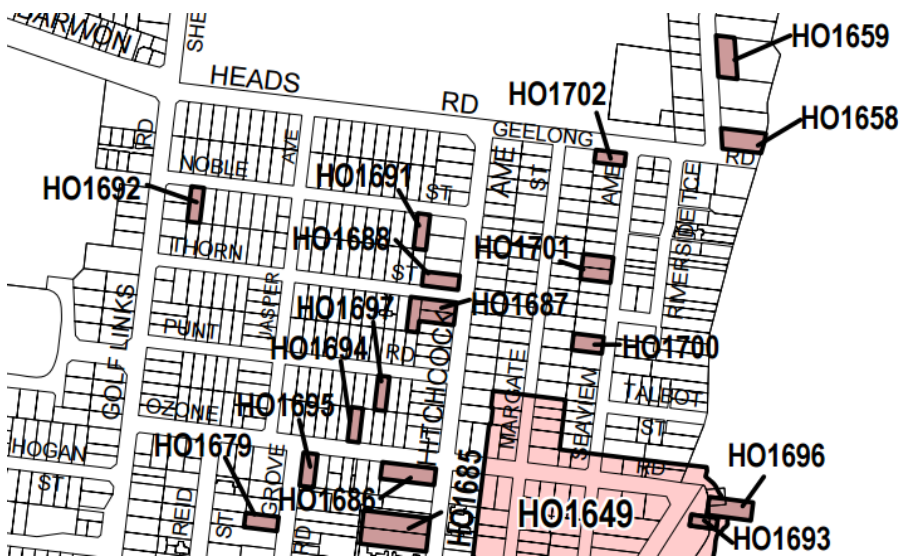
The extant house and cypress tree at 9 Bridge Road are of local heritage significance for their historical and aesthetic values, and warrant the application of interim heritage controls with a view to introducing an individual heritage overlay in the future.

APPENDIX A – Photograph c.1895



APPENDIX B – Heritage Overlay Map

Map No 81HO



Map No 88HO

