

## Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area, Geelong

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<b>Address</b>	Austin Park, Bellarine Street, Cogens Place, Corio Street, Eastern Beach Road, England Street, McCann Place, Prospect Lane, Veitch Place.
<b>Significance</b>	Local
<b>Significant Dates</b>	Circa 1850 - circa 1940
<b>Period/s</b>	Victorian, Federation & Interwar
<b>Building Types</b>	Residential
<b>Previous Assessment</b>	Part of Urban Conservation Area 3.1 (G Butler, Geelong Conservation Study, 3-4)



154-156 Corio Street



4-6 McCann Place



Austin Park, England Street in background



148-150 Corio Street

### Statement of Significance

#### What is Significant?

The Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area including residences dating from the Victorian, Federation and Interwar periods. Austin Park with its mature elm trees and sloped form is also significant as is the early basalt kerbing and channelling to the streets.

### How is it Significant?

The Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Greater Geelong.

### Why is it Significant?

Historically, the Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area is significant as a residential area that consists mostly of Victorian period houses and includes several early examples of modest cottages that were once common but of which there are now relatively few within the Municipality. These cottages are representative of the modest housing that was erected in nearby areas of Geelong, close to the commercial centre during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The narrow lanes with small allotments were quickly developed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century following the initial land sales in the late 1840s and early 1950s. Corio Street, McCann Place and Fyfe Place were part of the original 1838 survey of Geelong, whilst other lanes, extending north and south from Corio Street, were laid out as land was further subdivided, providing access to the small residential allotments. The area had largely been developed by circa 1900, with a few infill houses constructed during the Federation and Interwar periods as the population of Geelong grew and the suburbs expanded.

Historically, the land now known as Austin Park is also significant as a site that remained undeveloped and was used in the early Victorian period for the grazing of residents animals and by local footballers. Austin Park was gazetted as a public park in 1885, a time when the Council was expanding the number of public parks and improving those already set aside as a way of beautifying the city. (Criterion A)

The Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area is of aesthetic significance as a cohesive area consisting mostly of Victorian residences, with a few later houses from the Federation and Interwar periods which have a similar character to the earlier dwellings. The significant and contributory buildings in the precinct are mostly modest, single storey cottages, with a mix of hipped and transverse gable roof types, all clad in corrugated metal sheeting. Houses are predominantly clad in weatherboards, though there are a couple of notable brick examples and one early rendered residence. The consistent scale, material palette and the limited (if any) setbacks, combined with the relatively narrow width of all streets creates a cohesive character that is distinct from other areas in Geelong. The remaining sections of early basalt kerbing and channelling also contribute to the character.

The precinct is enhanced by Austin Park which slopes down towards the bay, providing views of the harbour from Corio and England streets. Landscaped in the 1880s by John Raddenberry, the park has mature elm trees to its south, east and west boundaries. Unusually relatively modest houses surround the parkland. (Criterion E)

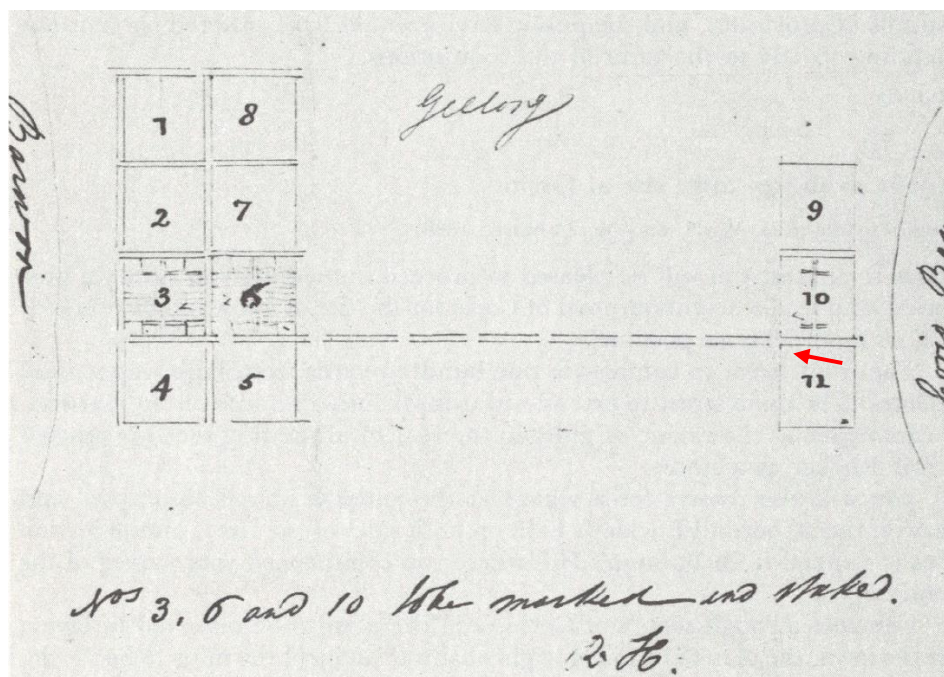
### Gradings

Street		Significant	Contributory	Non-contributory
Cogens Place	Odds		3, 7	5, 9
	Evens		4, 6, 8	
Corio Street	Odds	147, 149, 151		
	Evens	148, 150, 158-160	144, 146, 154, 156, 164,	142, 162
Eastern Beach Road	Evens	14A (Austin Park)		
England Street	Odds	9	1, 5	7, 11, 13, 15, 17-19
Fyfe Place South	Evens		4	
McCann Place	Evens	4, 6		
Veitch Place	Odds		1	

## History

The Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area is located within the original 1838 town survey area of Geelong which consisted of only eleven blocks. Land in the precinct area however was not made available for sale until 1848, ten years after the first sales, though the section at the western end (later Austin Park) was reserved from the outset.

According to the original survey of Geelong, the township was limited to a residential quarter of eight blocks near the fresh water supply on the Barwon River (South Geelong) that was separated from the port quarter of three blocks on Corio Bay (North Geelong). From late 1837, laying out a town reserve in the vicinity had been a matter of urgency for the NSW government however Robert Hoddle was not able to direct the contract surveyor H W H Smythe until March 1838 on where Geelong should be located.<sup>1</sup> A plan was finalised for the eleven sections, with allotments (20 in number) generally a half acre in area, during the middle of 1838. Although in June 1838 S A Perry, the deputy to the surveyor general in Sydney, stated that the 'symmetry of the building allotments has been somewhat deranged by the introduction of a small lane as a way of access to the rear of the corner allotments', the format was approved in September.<sup>2</sup> The NSW government decided to make land in three sections available (nos 3, 6 and 10) in October 1838, with the sales being held in February of the following year.<sup>3</sup>



Sketch by Robert Hoddle of first phase of surveying in Geelong, circa early 1838

Location of precinct highlighted

(Source: M Cannon & I MacFarlane, *Surveyors Problems and Achievements 1836-1839*, p170)

Land in the precinct area was sold in two phases over about a five year period with the first allotments being purchased during September 1848, nine years after the initial land sales in Geelong. The two phases relate to the size of the allotments. The original allotment size in Geelong was mostly 0.5 acre (2 roods or 80 perches) though there were generally four smaller allotments (60 perches) in each section due to the inclusion of a small, rear access lane to the main corner blocks.<sup>4</sup>

The original allotment sizes were retained for those parcels of land sold during the first sale. The first group were sold during 1848 and included allotments 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16, with allotments 14 and 5 selling during 1850 and 1851 respectively. The

<sup>1</sup> Michael Cannon & Ian MacFarlane, *Surveyors Problems and Achievements 1836-1839* (Historical Records of Victoria, vol. 5), Melbourne 1988, pp161, 169-171. There had been a push to locate the township at Point Henry but both Smythe and Hoddle found the location to be unsuitable, in part due to the lack of a reliable fresh water supply; Ian Wynd, *Geelong the Pivot: A Short History of Geelong and District*, (Cypress Historical Backgrounds No. 5), Melbourne 1971, p13

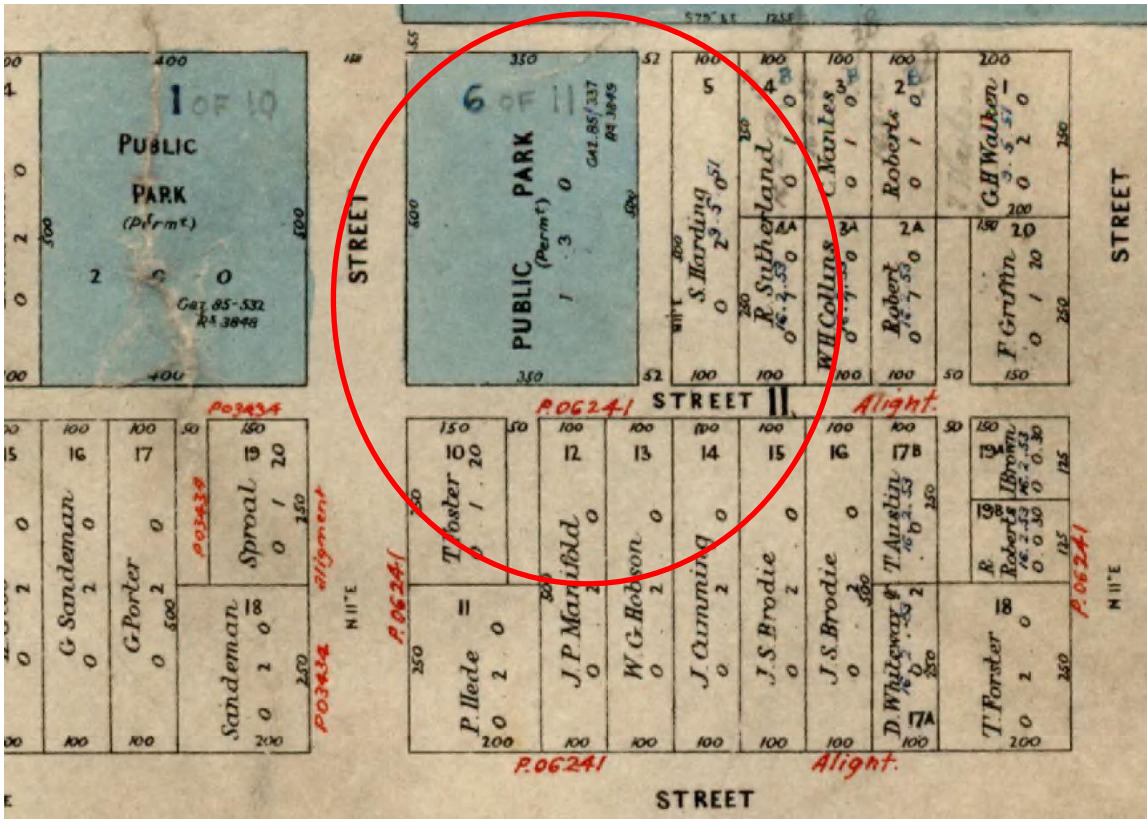
<sup>2</sup> M Cannon & I MacFarlane, *Surveyors Problems ...*, pp179+184

<sup>3</sup> M Cannon & I MacFarlane, *Surveyors Problems ...*, pp185-187, 190-191

<sup>4</sup> Ian Wynd, *Geelong the Pivot: A Short History of Geelong and District*, p12. Each section consisted of 20 allotments in two adjacent/mirrored blocks with a narrower street (such as Corio Street) separating the two blocks.

second phase of allotments were sold during June 1853 but were about half the size, mostly 0.25 acre (1 rood/40 perches), indicating that the government must have reduced their area as demand for land was increasing. Land at the east end of the section was divided as such, but only parts of allotments 4A and 17B form part of the precinct (refer image below).<sup>5</sup> Geelong's population was rapidly increasing during the early 1850s due to the discovery of gold in the goldfields to the north around Ballarat.<sup>6</sup>

Early landowners in the precinct included prominent members of the Geelong community such as pastoralists John Manifold and J Cumming, as well as successful businessman Silas Harding.<sup>7</sup>

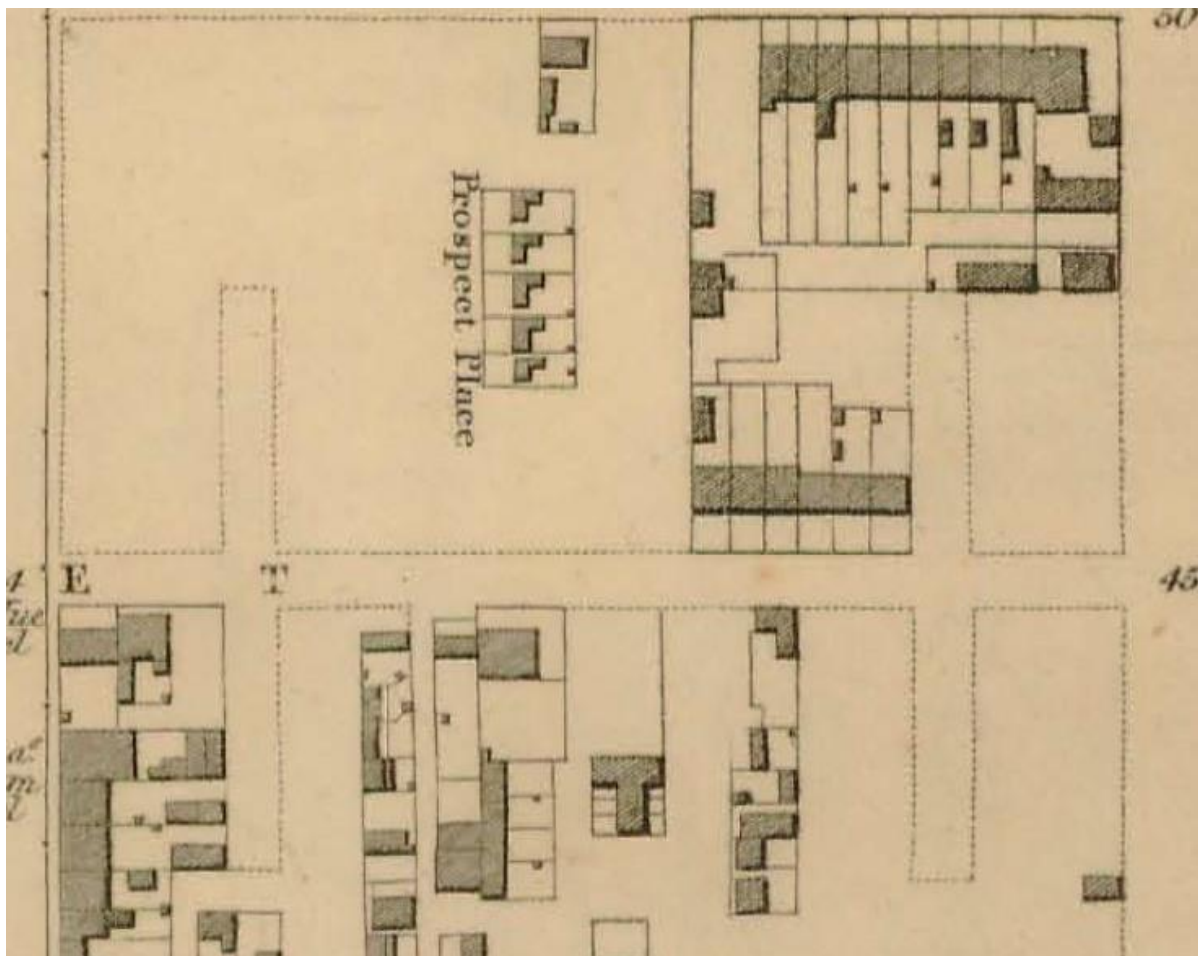


Parish Plan G29(10)  
Detail, showing broad area of precinct  
(Source: Landata)

The original crown allotments in the precinct were quickly subdivided within a few years of their sale. In addition, two narrower side streets were created on the south side of Corio Street: Veitch Place and Cogens Place. These were located between the original rear lanes at either end: McCann Place (originally Hotham Place) and Fyfe Place (North and South) which were located at the west and east ends respectively.

By 1854, four people were listed as living on the south side of Corio Street, including J Cumming.<sup>8</sup> In addition, five residences had been constructed on allotment 5 (fronting Prospect Place, now England Street) which had been purchased by Harding four years earlier. One of these residences, 'Murphy House', remains at no. 9. The brick cottage at 6 McCann Place had also been constructed by this stage and both Veitch and Cogens places had been partly developed.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Parish Plan, G29 (10) and Parish Plan Schedule 5311-3  
<sup>6</sup> Norman Houghton, *Geelong: A Short History*, Geelong 2003 [2005], p8  
<sup>7</sup> Graham Butler, *Geelong Urban Conservation Study*, 1991, 4-31  
<sup>8</sup> Geelong Commercial Directory and Almanac, 1854, p32  
<sup>9</sup> Geelong, County of Grant, J H Taylor, Surveyor Generals Office, 1853-54, State Library of Victoria



'Geelong, County of Grant, Victoria', J H Taylor (surveyor) 1853-54  
(Source: State Library Victoria)

Development continued in the next few years so that for instance by 1859, there were eight residences in Prospect Place (England Street), five in Hotham Place (McCann Place) and ten in Cogens Place.<sup>10</sup> About this time, the poor condition of the paving and/or roads in some of the side streets (Fyfe Place, Hotham Place and Prospect Lane) were the subject of a Council Order for appropriate repairs/works to be undertaken that local owners were obliged to resolve.<sup>11</sup>

By 1900, the precinct had been largely developed according to the following image. At this time, there were several single storey cottages to England Street, four of which had transverse gable roofs and a verandah to the front. Corio Street was also lined with small cottages as were most of the north-south lanes extending from it.

<sup>10</sup> Geelong Directory 1859, pp47-48

<sup>11</sup> 'Notice – Town Council of Geelong', *Geelong Advertiser*, 24 October, 1861, p3



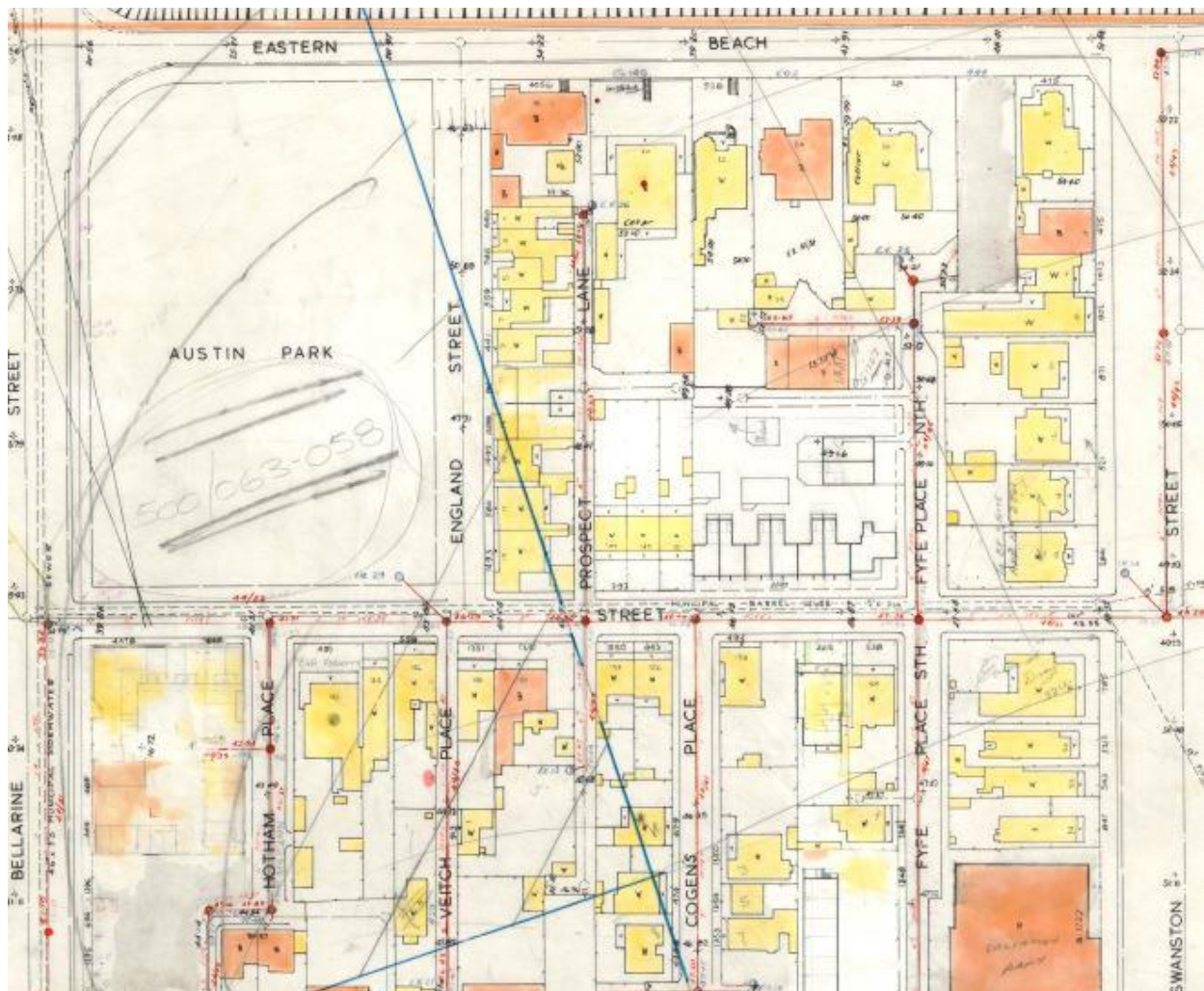
Geelong, Eastern Beach (circa 1900)  
Showing Austin Park, England and Corio streets  
(Source: State Library Victoria, H421)

During the Federation and Interwar periods, a few infill houses were constructed in the precinct including those at 5 England Street, 8 Cogens Place and 4 McCann Place.



Geelong harbour and waterfront (C D Pratt, 1926)  
Looking north-west with Austin Park indicated  
(Source: State Library of Victoria, H91.160/661)

There had been little change in the precinct during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, as by 1962, the houses were predominantly weatherboard (that is, presumably the original constructed on each lot), as there were only three brick examples at this time (4+6 McCann Place, and 150 Corio Street).



Barwon Water, sewer plan no. 15, 1962

Key - weatherboard (yellow) and brick (orange)

(Source: City of Geelong)

Later development (mostly during the late-20<sup>th</sup> century) within the precinct has involved the replacement of earlier single storey houses with larger two storey, usually brick/masonry residences.

#### *Austin Park*

The land that is now Austin Park represents a disruption of the original format of each city block and remained under-utilised for about half a century following the original town survey.

In an early letter dated 9 May 1838 from Robert Hoddle to the contract surveyor H W H Smythe this land was identified to be set aside as such, 'On No. 1 section, on the left side allotments Nos 6, 7, 8 and 9 to be reserved for Customs.'<sup>12</sup> This parcel was one of only two reserves initially identified in what was defined as North Geelong, with the other being on the opposite side of Bellarine Street, initially conceived to accommodate a Government House.<sup>13</sup>

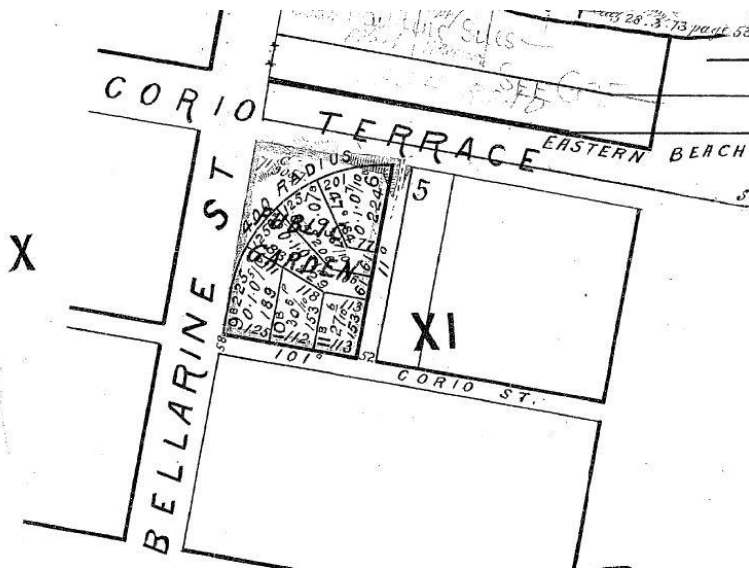
Although the land was defined from the outset nonetheless it is curious to note that a small lane (in line with McCann Place) was shown at the southern end on the 1854 plan J H Taylor plan of Geelong, as if the standard format for each section had been

<sup>12</sup> M Cannon & I MacFarlane, *Surveyors Problems and Achievements 1836-1839*, p178; p177. These allotments are darkened on a plan sent by Hoddle to Sydney on 8 May 1838.

<sup>13</sup> This land was rezoned in 1999 and has since been developed with residential accommodation and car park

applied.<sup>14</sup> The land however was defined as a public garden reserve on an 1856 township plan of Geelong.<sup>15</sup> James Austin later recollected that he had fed his 'sheep on this very spot' and over the years, the land had been used for the grazing of animals and by local footballers.<sup>16</sup>

The fact that this land was not being well utilised is suggested by a subdivision plan which was prepared in 1871 by the contract surveyor W C Reeves. The plan shows that there had been a proposal for the higher land to be subdivided into six township lots, varying in size but generally about a ¼ acre in area.<sup>17</sup> This plan was not acted upon.



Put away plan, G29F (1871)  
(Source: Landata)

Eventually in 1885, the site bound by Bellarine Street, Corio Street, England Street and Corio Terrace (Eastern Beach Road) was officially gazetted as a public park, being one acre three roods in size.<sup>18</sup>

Four years later, in August 1889, a ceremony was held on the site to mark the planting of the first tree, a Moreton Bay pine (since removed) which was located in the centre of the park. The tree was planted by James Austin, the second mayor of Geelong and the park was officially named 'The James Austin Public Park'.<sup>19</sup> Although James Austin had returned to England for 30 years, his efforts as a pioneering colonist and a supporter of the early development of Geelong (for instance, he had provided for the town clock, a local landmark that had been dominated the original Market Square in Geelong) was recognised by this naming and further validated at a public banquet held at the Geelong Town Hall on the same day.<sup>20</sup> James Austin, along with his brother Thomas established squatting runs in the Winchelsea district during 1837 but James later lived at Newtown at the 'Priory' before returning to Somerset, England in 1856.<sup>21</sup>

At this time, the slope of the ground was altered under the direction of John Raddenberry, who was the second curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens (1872 to 1896). Raddenberry had 'high portions of the land reduced and sloped towards the footpaths' to better accommodate park-goers. A picket fence was also installed though it seems the only gate was introduced at the north-

<sup>14</sup> J H Taylor, Surveyor Generals Office 'Geelong, County of Grant, Victoria', 1853-54, State Library of Victoria

<sup>15</sup> Put away plan, G22 (Landata webpage). The north-west corner included a curved section.

<sup>16</sup> 'The James Austin Public Park', *Geelong Advertiser*, 23 August 1889, p3

<sup>17</sup> Put away plan, G29F (Landata webpage)

<sup>18</sup> *Victorian Government Gazette*, 2 January 1885, p109

<sup>19</sup> 'The James Austin Public Park', *Geelong Advertiser*, 23 August 1889, p3.

<sup>20</sup> 'Public Banquet to Mr James Austin', *Geelong Advertiser*, 23 August 1889, p3

<sup>21</sup> P. L. Brown, 'Austin, James (1810-1896)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/austin-james-1520/text1897>, 1966, accessed online 24 April 2017. The Austin family were prominent in the Geelong District – Thomas was responsible for the notable mansion Barwon Park at Winchelsea and his wife, Elizabeth Harding, founded the Austin Hospital in Melbourne.

east corner of the site.<sup>22</sup> By October 1889, 'the loose crumbling earth which sloped towards Victoria Parade' (now Eastern Beach Road) was 'smoothed off and sowed with quick growing grasses and a number of trees planted over'.<sup>23</sup>

The creation of Austin Park as a retreat for the public was part of a broader effort by the Council to beautify Geelong by expanding the number of parks and public spaces. In 1888-89, the Geelong Council was reported to have spent £2,205 maintaining the parks and reserves.<sup>24</sup>



'Geelong from harbour Yarra Pier in foreground' (C D Pratt, circa 1936-37)  
(Source: State Library Victoria, H91.160/821)

By 1927, the trees to the boundary were well-established but the Moreton Bay fig that had been planted to the centre had been removed, as had the picket fence to the boundary.<sup>25</sup> By the mid-1930s, there was a steep path at the north-east corner with a fenced off garden area and sections of retaining wall.<sup>26</sup>

The park retains its original format, though the treatment at the northern end has been altered with a curved, more gently sloping pathway and a broad garden bed with rock edging.

## Description

The Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area is a residential precinct located immediately to the east of the commercial centre of Geelong. It consists of Austin Park and the nearby streets to the south and east. The precinct has a distinctive character with relatively narrow streets and lanes to which there are modest cottages on relatively small allotments with limited setbacks. The precinct centres on the east-west road of Corio Street which was set out in the original town survey as a narrower intermediate street between Malop Street and Corio Terrace. McCann Place and Fyfe Place were also part of the original town survey, providing access from Corio Street to the rear of allotments fronting Yarra and Bellarine streets. Other lanes in the precinct appear to have been set out as the land was further subdivided.

Austin Park, located on the corner of Bellarine Street and Eastern Beach Road, slopes down towards the north-west and Geelong Harbour. Houses to England Street and a few to Corio Street are located opposite, having views of both the park and the bay beyond. There are mature Dutch elms (*Ulmus x hollandica 'Major'*) to the south, east and west sides of the park (6 to Corio Street, 9 to Bellarine Street and 4 to England Street with two young specimens in the south-east corner). There are also three palms and a peppercorn to the northern end of the garden.

<sup>22</sup> *Geelong Advertiser*, 17 August 1889, p2

<sup>23</sup> 'Our Pleasant Places', *Geelong Advertiser*, 5 October 1889, p1

<sup>24</sup> 'Our Pleasant Places', *Geelong Advertiser*, 5 October 1889, p1

<sup>25</sup> 'Geelong Port Area', C Pratt, 27.09.1927 (SLV, H91.160/802)

<sup>26</sup> The Walbaringa flats had been built by this time at 16-18 Eastern Beach Road (HO906) and the new path and garden treatment at this corner may have been introduced at the same time.

A curved basalt retaining wall has been introduced in the north-west corner to one side of the asphalt pathway. Adjacent in the wide embankment that slopes down to Eastern Beach Road is low planting, including many succulents. The latter also features volcanic rock edging and other small groups of rocks. The roads surrounding the park retain sections of early basalt kerbing and channelling as does Corio Street.

The significant and contributory buildings largely date from the Victorian period, and include several early examples from the 1850s. Other contributory places include three Federation period houses and an Interwar residence. Most houses in the precinct are relatively modest, and have limited, if any setback from the street and side boundaries. All significant and contributory houses are single storey, except for the two storey residences at 1 and 5 England Street. A notable row of three houses at 147, 149 and 151 Corio Street have been altered at the rear to accommodate a second level but are mostly intact to the front.

Houses in the precinct are predominantly clad in weatherboards with exceptions being the brick residence at 1 England Street, the Irish Cottages to McCann Place and the rendered residence at 150 Corio Street. Roofs are usually hipped or have a transverse gable and all are clad in corrugated metal sheeting. The façades are mostly symmetrical and have a verandah to the front, typically extending the full width of the house. Verandahs usually have a concave or convex roof profile and often with cast iron or timber detailing, some of which has been altered/renewed. Victorian period residences typically have a central door with timber sash window to either side. Many houses in the precinct also retain at least one chimney, most of which are face brick. Unusually, the cottage at 148 Corio Street has four elaborate rendered chimneys with panels and brackets.

Houses from the Federation and Interwar periods are consistent with the earlier houses in the precinct in terms of their scale, setbacks and material palette. Both the Federation period house at 3 Cogens Place and the Interwar period residence at 8 Cogens Place have similar street setbacks to the nearby Victorian period cottages. Similarly, the Federation period cottage at 6 McCann Place is constructed to the street boundary like the adjacent Victorian house at no. 4. The house at no. 6 also has the same form as the earlier house and is similarly constructed of brick with a rendered plinth and windowsills.

There is some late 20<sup>th</sup> century, generally two storey housing in the area, with most being concentrated at the southern end of England Street.

## Comparative Analysis

The City East Heritage Area is one of a couple of heritage areas in Geelong that includes several early Victorian cottages, which have become relatively scarce within the Municipality. The Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area has a high percentage of early cottages when compared to these other precincts and has a distinct character created which is highly consistent in terms of the scale and setbacks of graded buildings and is further unified by the narrowness of all streets. Other precincts in the Municipality that contain modest housing dating from the early Victorian period include:

- The Waterloo Heritage Area is one of the earliest surviving suburban areas in Geelong West with intensive development occurring in this precinct from the 1850s. Whilst about a dozen residences from the 1850s remain in the precinct, there is a much higher percentage of Federation and Interwar period residences when compared to the Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area. This Waterloo Heritage Area is a larger precinct with the early Victorian houses scattered throughout. This combined with the larger street setbacks and wider roadways gives the precinct a different character to that of the Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area.
- The City South Heritage Area covers several residential areas located to the south of Little Myers Street and includes a few early Victorian cottages in South Geelong on what was part of Geelong's earliest residential subdivision. Houses from this period are located on Balling, Foster and Yarra streets and also have limited, if any street setbacks. This area has a more mixed character than the Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area as it includes a higher percentage of larger Federation and Interwar period residences. Both areas do however have narrower north-south lanes that were formed as subdivision of the original allotments occurred, though unlike the lanes near Austin Park, houses to the lanes between Balling and Foster Street (City South Heritage Area) date from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

## Thematic Context

### *Victorian Historical Themes*

Theme 6.7 Making homes for Victorians: middle class and working class homes.

**Recommendations**

*Statutory protection*

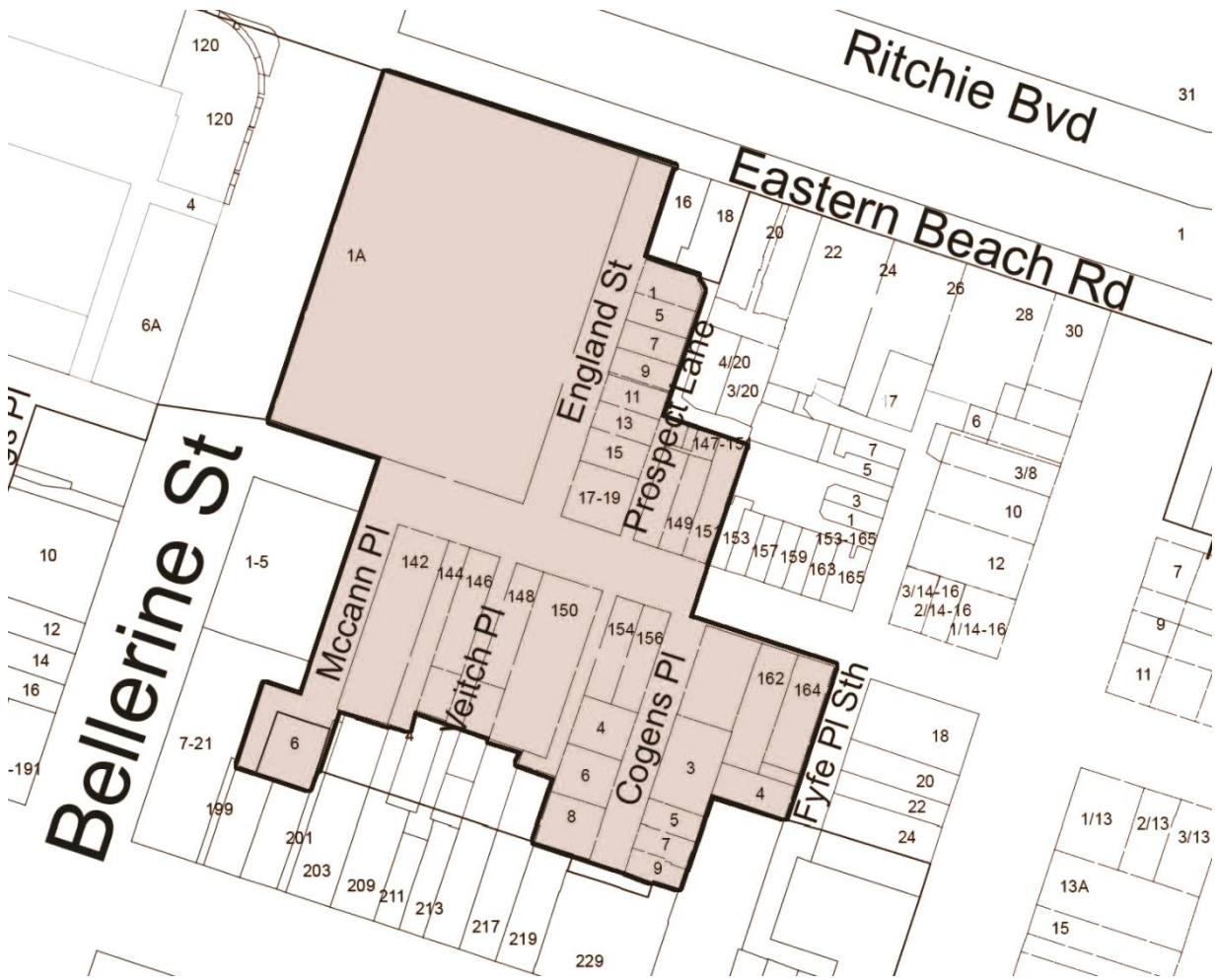
It is recommended that the Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area, as outlined on the map below, be removed from the existing City East Heritage Area (HO1639) and included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme as a separate heritage overlay.

*Management objectives*

Refer to the relevant local heritage policy at Clause 22.09 Cultural Heritage and Clause 22.68 Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme.

**Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls**

External Paint Controls	No
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or Fences	No



 Recommended Austin Park and Environs Heritage Area

