

Western Beach Road Heritage Area, Geelong

Address	Western Beach Road
Significance	Local
Significant Dates	Circa 1850s – circa mid-1960s
Period/s	Victorian, Federation, Interwar & Post-War
Building Types	Residential
Previous Assessment	Urban Conservation Area 1.1 (north of Ginn Street) and Amenity Area 1.2 (south of Ginn Street). (G Butler, Geelong Conservation Study, 3-3)



Fernshaw, 4 Western Beach Road



36, 38 and 40 Western Beach Road



Llanberis, 30 Western Beach Road



2 and 2a Western Beach Road

Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The Western Beach Heritage Area, extending between The Esplanade (to the north) and near Malone Street (to the south), includes residences dating from the Victorian, Federation, Interwar and Post-War periods which overlook Corio Bay. The area, includes many substantial houses that were erected for prominent citizens close to the town centre on premier bayside allotments and/or designed by prominent Geelong-based architects.

The character of the precinct is defined generally by wide allotments and high quality residential buildings, either single or two storey. Typically houses have open gardens to the street to maximise views across Corio Bay, some Post-War places also incorporating original landscape elements such as brick planter beds. Also contributing to the significance of the precinct are original front fences, including cast iron palisade fences to Victorian residences and low brick fences to Post-War houses.

The significant and contributory buildings in the precinct are largely constructed of masonry. Unusually, a high percentage of the Victorian period houses in the precinct incorporate faceted bays to the façades and most have roofs clad in slate. This includes the symmetrical *Fernshaw* (no. 4) and *Glenburnie* (no. 52-54) as well as the asymmetric house at no. 36, and *Warrain* (no. 56). A few Victorian residences also retain cast iron palisade fences. There are fewer examples from the Federation and Interwar, though these generally have more complex or steeply pitched roofs. Residences from the Post-War period reflect Modernist influences with larger windows and low-pitched roofs, and generally have cream brickwork.

How is it Significant?

The Western Beach Heritage Area is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Greater Geelong.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, the Western Beach Heritage Area is significant as a prestigious residential area that includes substantial houses from the Victorian, Federation, Interwar and Post-War periods. These houses were erected for prominent residents of Geelong, with many of the earliest houses originally having larger land holdings. Developed from the mid-19th century, land in the precinct has been progressively subdivided with several high quality Post-War houses erected in the location of established gardens which had previously been part of larger Victorian period holdings. This includes the notable residence at no.2 which was erected on part land that had previously been part of the holdings of *Fernshaw* (no. 4). During this time there was a shift in the precinct to multi-residential living, involving the conversion of large houses, such as *Llanberris*, to flats. (Criterion A)

The Western Beach Heritage Area is of aesthetic significance as a waterfront residential area which is characterised by substantial, high quality residences mostly from the Victorian and Post-War periods, with a few houses also from the Federation and Interwar periods. Indicative of this quality is the fact that the houses are typically masonry and many have tiled roofs. They are generally good examples of their type and are mostly intact with open garden settings. Several were designed by eminent local architects, such as Davidson & Henderson. (Criterion E)

Gradings

Street		Significant	Contributory	Non-contributory
Western Beach Road	Evens	4, 30, 36, 38, 40, 52-54, 56	2, 2a, 12, 12a, 14a, 20, 24, 26, 28, 32, 42, 58	6-8, 12b, 14, 22, 34, 46-48, 50
	Odds		1, 1a	

History

Allotments in the precinct were largely sold in three stages: the four immediately to the north of the Ginn Street in May 1852, those between Ginn Street and Malone Street (then known as George Street) four months later in September 1852, and the remainder (in the north) in May 1853. This excluded allotment 1 on the corner of Western Beach Road (then known as Victoria Terrace) and Latrobe Terrace which was set aside as a reserve. This allotment was sold 15 years later in 1868.¹



'Plan of the Subdivision of Sections nos XLI, XLII, XLIII & XLIV' G19(3), 1856. Land in the precinct was sold in 3 stages (indicated). (Source: Landata webpage)



'Geelong, County of Grant, Victoria', J H Taylor (1853-54). The building at no. 12 is indicated. (Source: State Library of Victoria)

By 1854, several buildings had been erected in Western Beach Road including a residence at no. 12, likely to be the extant building but which was converted to two dwellings during the late 19th century.² By this time, a steam saw mill had been erected at both the north and south ends of the precinct (in about the location of 4 and 58 Western Beach Road).

In 1876, the substantial residence *Fernshaw* (no.4) was erected for prominent local businessman and wool broker Hugh Murray Strachan. The two storey house, with coach and stables building was designed by noted local architects Davidson & Henderson.³ By this time, a large house (now demolished) had been erected on the corner of Ginn Street and Western Beach Road and was used as an 'educational establishment for young ladies'. Known as *Bella Vista*, the school was described as being '... most pleasantly and healthily situated on the Western Beach, facing the bay, a few minutes' walk from the Bathing Houses [and having] a large recreation ground attached to the house'.⁴

¹ Parish Plan, G29 (10) and Schedule 5311-3. By 1926, this lot appears to have become part of *Fernshaw* (H91.160/833)

² Geelong, County of Grant, J H Taylor, Surveyor Generals Office, 1853-54, State Library of Victoria. Victorian Heritage Database, citation for 12 Western Beach Road, accessed 1 May 2017

³ Victorian Heritage Database, entry for 'Fernshaw 4 Western Beach Road, Geelong', accessed 1 May 2017

⁴ *Geelong Advertiser*, 8 June 1876, p1. *Geelong Advertiser*, 22 February 1896, p2



'View of Corio Bay, from St. Paul's Tower, Geelong' (Fred Kruger, circa 1882)

The two residences on opposite corners of Ginn Street and Western Beach Road are indicated
(Source: State Library of Victoria, H39614/18)

By 1883, about nine residences had been erected on Western Beach Road.⁵ The single storey residence on the opposite corner of Ginn Street (no. 30 which now has an additional storey) had been constructed by this time (refer to photograph below). Also dating to this period is the single storey residence *Glenburnie* (formerly *Highgate*)⁶ at no. 54, which was constructed in 1880 for W W Bradley to the designs of Alexander Davidson & Co.⁷ Bradley was president of the Gordon Technical College and was also on the advisory board for The Ballarat Trustees, Executors & Agency Company.⁸

Several other residences were also erected in the precinct during the late 19th century so that by the turn of the century most vacant allotments had been built on. Other houses constructed during this period include those at nos 36 and 56 both of which were completed by 1888 and were constructed for Andrew Drew and James Martin (timber merchant) respectively.⁹ That at no. 56 was designed by Geelong architect G S Jackson.¹⁰ By 1890, the paired houses at 38-40 Western Beach Road had been erected for William Olive. The location of these houses, known as *Windermere* and *Silvermere*, was advertised as being 'one of the best in Geelong, commanding a view of the whole bay, close to the baths and railway station'.¹¹

During the early 20th century, a few more dwellings were erected in the precinct, including the circa 1915 residence at no. 28 which was located on the site of the former school *Bella Vista* and the Federation bungalow at no. 22. Whilst by 1926 much of the street had been built on there were still a few large estates which had substantial gardens (refer to image below). These included *Fernshaw* at no.4 whose garden extended north to the corner of Latrobe Terrace, a single storey residence at no. 14 (now demolished) which had a large garden to the south, no. 20 which also had a garden to the south, and *Llanberris* at no. 30 which had a substantial garden with mature trees to the south.

⁵ Maning & Bishop's Geelong and Western District Directory, 1882-83. Properties listed under Victoria Terrace

⁶ *Geelong Advertiser*, 12 March 1920, p1

⁷ Victorian Heritage Database, entry for 'Glenburnie 54 Western Beach Road, Geelong', accessed 1 May 2017,

⁸ *Geelong Advertiser*, 16 February 1917, p1. *Geelong Advertiser*, 26 August 1921, p1

⁹ City of Geelong Urban Conservation Study, 'C' Citations, Volume 4 (a), entries for 36 and 56 Western Beach Road

¹⁰ Victorian Heritage Database, entry for 56 Western Beach Road, accessed 1 May 2017

¹¹ *Ibid*, entry for 38-40 Western Beach Road. *Geelong Advertiser*, 17 September 1880, p3



'Geelong and harbour area' (C D Pratt, circa 1926)
Ginn Street is located in the centre. Gardens at nos 14, 20 and 30 (left to right) are indicated.
(Source: State Library of Victoria, H91.160/693)

By 1938, it appears that 20 Western Beach Road had been subdivided and a single storey house erected (since demolished) at what is now no. 22. The bungalow at no. 58 had also been erected by this time, replacing an earlier house.



'Geelong waterfront including Cunningham Pier and Western Beach' (C D Pratt, November 1938)
The bungalows at 20 (red) and 58 (yellow) Western Beach Road are indicated
(Source: State Library of Victoria, H91.160/630)

It was not until the late Interwar and Post-War periods that the three larger allotments at nos 4, 14 and 30 were subdivided. In 1936, the substantial estate *Llanberis* (no. 30) was advertised for sale when it was promoted as an opportunity for speculators and noted for its 'magnificent views over Corio Bay'. In the advertisement, the estate was said to 'lend itself for subdivision into flats' noting that 'Geelong wants flats in this locality'.¹² By the early 1940s, at least one parcel of land had been subdivided from the *Llanberis* estate with a Modernist brick residence (since demolished) constructed at 34 Western Beach Road for Mercer Street hotel keepers Elsie and Frances Davison.¹³

¹² *Argus*, 19 September 1936, p3

¹³ City of Geelong Urban Conservation Study, 'C' Citations, Volume 4 (a), entry for 34 Western Beach Road

Within the precinct, there was a shift towards flats or multi-residential buildings during the Post-War period. In addition to the conversion of *Llanberis* to flats, a substantial two storey Victorian residence at no. 50 had also been converted to flats by 1948.¹⁴ Further, in the 1951 advertisement for the sale of *Fernshaw*, the site was said to offer 'a splendid opportunity for conversion and erection of flats as it contains the only vacant land in this part of Geelong'. The locality was promoted for its views over Corio Bay and for being within a few minutes walk of the centre of the city with a tram line passing the door'.¹⁵ The house had been converted to flats by 1960 when the property was known as *Maritana Flats*.¹⁶

By 1957, houses had been constructed at both 2 and 2a Western Beach Road (refer to image below) on land that had previously been part of the holdings of *Fernshaw*. Morris Jacobs, presumably the Mayor of Geelong in the early 1950s, is listed as the occupant of one of these houses in the 1960 Sands and McDougall's Directory.¹⁷



'Unidentified brick residence, Geelong' (Wolfgang Sievers, 1957)
Showing 2 (front) and 2a (rear) Western Beach Road
(Source: State Library Victoria, H98.30/167)

Other residences erected during the 1950s include the brick dwellings at nos 14a and 32 as well as the two storey flats at no. 52. The attached houses at 1 and 1a Western Beach Road had been erected by 1967 on the final parcel of land in the precinct to be developed (refer to plan below).¹⁸

¹⁴ *The Age*, 18 November 1948, p5

¹⁵ *Camperdown Chronicle*, 2 February 1951, p8

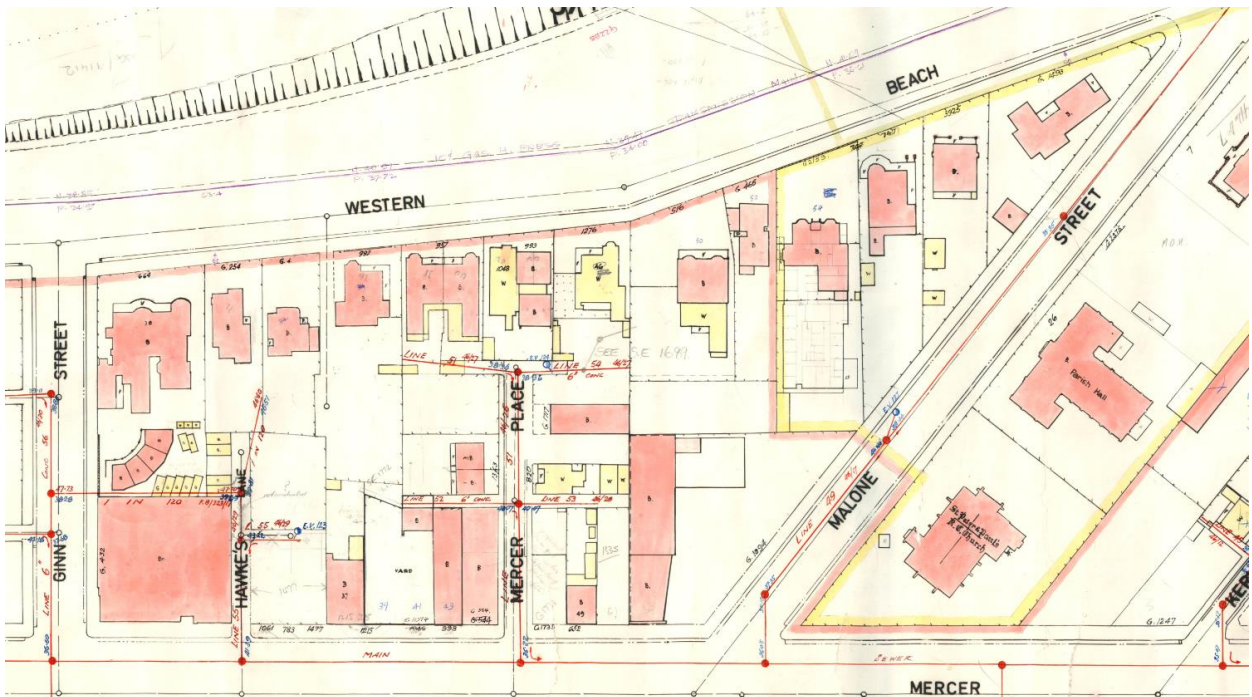
¹⁶ Sands and McDougall's Directory of Victoria, 1960

¹⁷ Jacobs is listed at no. 2a, though no. 2a is listed as being closer to Latrobe Terrace than no. 2. *The Argus*, 30 January 1953, p14

¹⁸ Sands and McDougall's Directory of Victoria, 1955 and 1960



Geelong Waterworks & Sewerage Trust detail plan no. 38 (May 1959 with later updates)
 Key: weatherboard (yellow) and brick (orange)
 (Source: City of Geelong)



Geelong Waterworks & Sewerage Trust detail plan no. 36 (revised October 1912, May 1914, Nov. 1965)
 Key: weatherboard (yellow) and brick (orange)
 (Source: City of Geelong)

Description

The Western Beach Heritage Area is a residential precinct located on the high ground to Western Beach overlooking Corio Bay. The precinct includes residences which front Western Beach Road between The Esplanade in the north, extending almost as far south as Malone Street. The precinct includes a relatively high proportion of substantial houses, many of which are architect designed and/or are good examples of their type.

Many of the significant and contributory buildings in the precinct date to the Victorian and Post-War periods, with a similar number for each. There are fewer examples from the Federation and Interwar periods. Buildings in the precinct are either one or two storeys with a few dating from the Post-War period having an attic level (single storey plus attic level). All houses are constructed of masonry, either face brick or rendered, except for the three timber houses located immediately to the north of Ginn Street. Of the masonry houses, the majority are face brick though a few are now painted.

Houses to Western Beach Road are oriented parallel with the side boundaries (except for nos 1 and 1a) such that those at the north and south ends of the precinct are located at an angle to the street which curves to follow the shoreline of Corio Bay. Most houses in the precinct are detached though there are three attached pairs: the Victorian pair at nos 38 and 40, an early Victorian residence converted to a pair at nos 12 and 12a, and a Post-War pair at nos 1 and 1a. In addition, there is a mid-20th century block of flats (no. 42) as well as the Victorian residence *Ilanberis* (no. 30) which has been converted to flats. All houses are set back from the street and most have open gardens to the front, maximising views of Corio Bay.

All significant and contributory houses have a verandah/porch to the front with Victorian places having either a large verandah, often returning around one side, or a small recessed entry porch. All Federation and Interwar residences have a verandah to the front whilst those from the Post-War period have a small porch to the lower level or a balcony to the upper level. Original windows from all periods are timber framed. There are sash types to all houses except those from the Post-War period which have windows and doors arranged in a large unit. Earlier houses have a regular fenestration pattern with high solid to void ratio typical of buildings from these periods.

Victorian period houses mostly have a pitched roof clad in slate, except for no. 26 and the paired houses at nos 38-40 which are clad in corrugated metal sheeting. Most roofs are visible, though a few are concealed behind a parapet. Several of the Victorian houses in the precinct have faceted bays to the façade. Notable Victorian residences *Fernshaw* (no. 4) and *Glenburnie* (no. 52-54) have two bays either side of a central recessed porch, a noted design feature of the prolific Geelong architects Davidson & Henderson. A few Victorian residences at the southern end of the precinct retain cast iron palisade fences with basalt plinths.

Federation and Interwar period residences also have pitched roofs, with those from the former often being more complex, that is consisting of hipped and gable sections. The Federation period houses are usually non-masonry (that is, clad in weatherboards). Houses from these periods, along with most of those from the Victorian period, retain original chimneys.

Places dating from the Post-War period reflect Modernist influences with an emphasis placed on simplified, more cubic forms and horizontal articulation. All have low pitched (including skillion) or flat roofs and often incorporate some lightweight cladding in combination with face brick, usually cream, to the walls. Most houses from this period also retain original landscaping elements, including brick planter beds and/or front fences.

Comparative Analysis

The Western Beach Heritage Area is one of several heritage areas in the Greater Geelong municipality with high quality, substantial housing which was developed from the mid-19th century. The area is distinguished from many of these other precincts by the relatively high percentage of substantial Post-War houses that were erected as land was subdivided from earlier holdings.

Another area which demonstrates a similar pattern of development is Eastern Beach Road located in the City East Heritage Area. This residential street includes many substantial houses that also overlook Corio Bay, though these are typically larger than those to Western Beach Road. Like allotments to Western Beach Road, a few of the large early holdings to Eastern Beach Road were not subdivided until the Post-War period, when other quality buildings (flats and residences) were erected on the subdivided allotments.

The Esplanade Heritage Area, also located on the waterfront overlooking Corio Bay, is similarly characterised by substantial houses with many notable examples designed by local architects. This area was however largely developed within a much shorter timeframe than Western Beach Road, with houses mostly constructed during the Federation and Interwar periods.

Thematic Context

Victorian Historical Themes

Theme 6.7 Making homes for Victorians: Homes for the wealthy, middle class homes.

Recommendations

Statutory protection

It is recommended that the Western Beach 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 as well as the specific heritage policy for the 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

