

GAWLER STREET EARLY DEVELOPMENT PRECINCT – HO271

Introduction

This Heritage Citation for the Gawler Street Early Development Precinct documents the historical background of the Precinct and presents an assessment of heritage significance.

This Citation identifies properties based on their contribution to the heritage values of the Precinct:

- ‘Significant’ heritage places are individually important places of State or local heritage significance. They are listed individually in the Glenelg Shire Planning Scheme Schedule to the Heritage Overlay. They can also be places that, when combined within a precinct, form an important part of the heritage significance of the precinct.
- ‘Contributory’ heritage places are places that contribute to the heritage significance of a precinct. They are not considered to be individually important places of heritage significance, however when combined with other ‘significant’ and/or ‘contributory’ heritage places, they play an integral role in demonstrating the heritage significance of a precinct.
- ‘Non-contributory’ places are places within a heritage precinct that have no identifiable heritage significance. They are included within a Heritage Overlay because any development of the place may impact on the heritage significance of the precinct or adjacent ‘significant’ or ‘contributory’ heritage places.

Historical background

The Gawler Street Early Development Precinct extends from 3 Gawler Street, west to Percy Street, on both sides of Gawler Street.

Gawler Street, with its close proximity to the early jetties, hotels and manufacturing sites, naturally became a focus of commercial activity in the early development of Portland.

The nature and history of the key buildings in the Precinct are discussed below.

The former Builders Inn (25 Gawler Street) was built in the 1840s by a local builder, John Leahy, although it was only licensed as an inn for one year (1849-50). The building has a central section abutting the footpath flanked by similar gabled wings with verandahs. The central section has fluted doric pilasters on either side of the central door. This building operated as a weighbridge store for many years, with a weighbridge located at the front in Gawler Street. It was subsequently a shop, then a boarding house and a private home.

The cottage and shop at 15-17 Gawler Street is one of the oldest residential and retail complexes in Victoria, dating to 1849 (cottage), 1855 (weatherboard addition) and 1860 (brick and stone store on street front).

The single-storey brick and timber building at 19-21 Gawler Street dates possibly the 1850s. Parts of the building complex appear on FW Birmingham’s 1853 survey map of Portland. It appears that the building originally operated as a shop. The doric pilaster flanking the original shop windows and the splayed entry to the building still survive on the facade. The whole building complex contains elements typical of early structures and the building is considered to be one of the earliest surviving in Portland.

The single-storey timber former shop at 16 Gawler Street was built around 1900. It is a typical example of a simple shop design from this period. It is joined on the eastern side to a colonial Georgian-style double-storey bluestone shop at number 14 Gawler Street, built around 1856 for John Huxley, a butcher. The simply composed dressed stone façade of 14 Gawler Street, with its large ground floor windows presents an intact and notable example of Portland’s early commercial buildings.

The weatherboard house at 13 Gawler Street and the brick house at 20 Gawler Street were built in 1913 and 1914 respectively. The 20 Gawler Street house has a distinctly Victorian timber-framed verandah with cast iron lacework and tiled floor and tuck-pointed brickwork.

Physical description

Gawler Street slopes to the east from Percy Street, towards the foreshore. Most of the contributory buildings in this Precinct are located on the southern side of Gawler Street, with only four buildings on the northern side. Many buildings in this Precinct remain intact and fundamentally consistent with their original design and function.

The buildings have consistent, very low setbacks from Gawler Street. The older Georgian-style buildings (14, 16, 15-17 and 25 Gawler Street) have no setback at all, while the later Victorian buildings have low setbacks typically with a small front garden and a picket fence.

Comparative analysis

The Gawler Street Early Development Precinct is unique in Victoria. A relatively unaltered precinct which retains so many features of the early colonial style is very unusual. As such comparative analysis is difficult; however the most appropriate comparison is with places and precincts in the Moyne Shire, and Port Fairy in particular. The development of Port Fairy and Portland were similar in many ways. Both towns were established in remote parts of Port Phillip, a long way from administrative centres and both were the result of early sealing and whaling industries.

The Port Fairy Commercial Precinct (Moyne Shire HO14) also contains a mix of retail and commercial buildings, and developed as a result of the needs of early trade and industry. However, the construction period in this precinct is generally later than that of the Gawler Street Early Development Precinct.

What is significant?

The Gawler Street Early Development Precinct, from Percy Street to Bentinck Street along both sides of Gawler Street is significant.

Contributory elements to the heritage significance of the Precinct include:

- Early colonial architecture including buildings at 14-16, 15-17, 19-21 and 25 Gawler Street.
- Victorian architecture including examples at 3, 5, 18 and 20 Gawler Street.
- Former retail buildings including the weatherboard shop at 14 Gawler Street, the bluestone shop at 16 Gawler Street and the red brick and stone shop at 15-17 Gawler Street.
- The consistent low setbacks of buildings to the street which presents an overall sense of cohesion to the streetscape and evokes the early colonial period of its early development.
- The predominantly single-storey nature of the buildings on Gawler Street (the exception being the two-storey bluestone shop at 16 Gawler Street, which is a relatively low two-storey building).
- The use of locally available or recycled materials in many of the earlier houses.

- Outbuildings at 14-16, 15-17, 19-21 and 23 Gawler Street.
- Views to the east towards Portland Bay.

How is it significant?

The Gawler Street Early Development Precinct is of historical significance (HERCON Criterion B), aesthetic significance (HERCON Criterion E) and creative/technical significance (HERCON Criterion F) to the Glenelg Shire.

Why is it significant?

Gawler Street Early Development Precinct is historically significant (HERCON Criterion A) to the Glenelg Shire as one of earliest combined retail, commercial and residential precincts in Portland. The proximity of Gawler Street to the wharves and jetties, and therefore early trade and industry in Portland, resulted in significant development in retail and commercial business in this area.

Gawler Street Early Development Precinct is aesthetically significant (HERCON Criterion E) to the Glenelg Shire for exhibiting key architectural characteristics particularly of the early colonial period (1840-1860) in Portland. The remaining retail premises in this precinct are distinct from the more ornate Victorian premises elsewhere in Portland and demonstrate the modest nature of retail and commercial premises in this early period.

Gawler Street Early Development Precinct is of creative and technical significance (HERCON Criterion F) for its architectural styles which show key features from different periods in Portland's development. The early colonial period is demonstrated in retail premises and residential cottages such as that at 15-17 Gawler Streets, while the later Victorian residences demonstrate how the precinct evolved to a more residential use in the Victorian era.

Photographs



25 Gawler Street, the former Builders Arms c 1849 (significant)



25 Gawler Street, the former Builders Arms. Central part dates to 1849, timber gabled wing buildings date to c 1860 (significant).



Timber cottage at 15 Gawler Street (significant)



Brick and stone shop front at 17 Gawler Street, dates to around 1860 (significant)



19-21 Gawler Street (significant)



14 and 16 Gawler Street, timber shop front (14) and two-storey bluestone shop (former butcher) (significant)



20 Gawler Street, Victorian brick residence (contributory)



Eastern side of 16 Gawler Street, showing neat bluestone construction and chimney (significant)



Victorian residence at 18 Gawler Street. Note rendered corbled chimney (contributory).

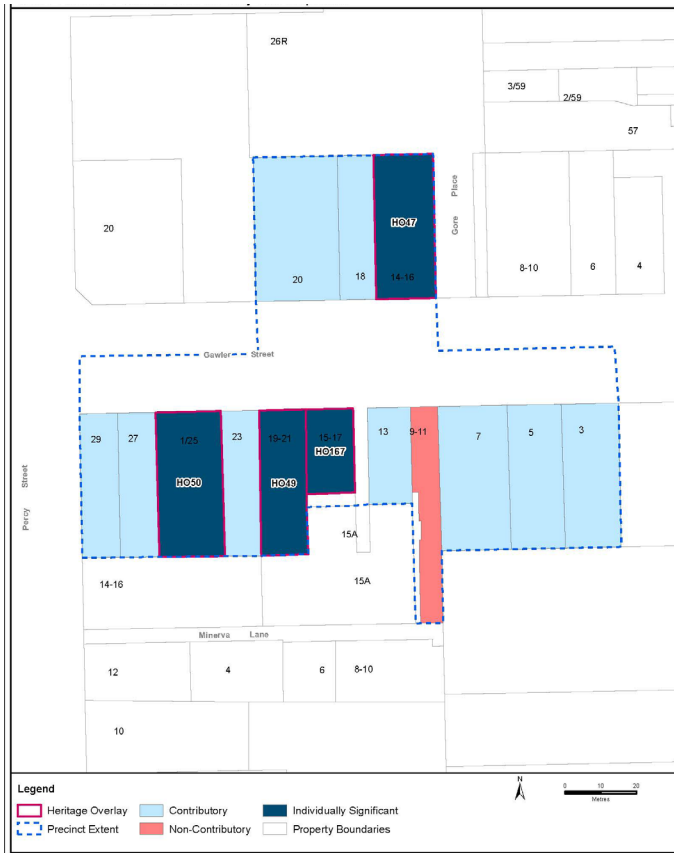


27 Gawler Street, Victorian weatherboard house with block fronted detail and Portland brick chimney at rear (contributory)



29 Gawler Street, Edwardian / Victorian weatherboard with gable roof and fine stained glass window in porch to Percy Street (contributory)

Gawler Street Early Development Precinct Map



Contributory Places

- 3 Gawler Street
- 5 Gawler Street
- 7 Gawler Street
- 13 Gawler Street
- 18 Gawler Street
- 20 Gawler Street
- 23 Gawler Street
- 27 Gawler Street
- 29 Gawler Street

Significant Places

- 14-16 Gawler Street
- 15-17 Gawler Street
- 19-21 Gawler Street
- 25 Gawler Street

Recommended Controls (2016)

External Paint Controls	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Fences & Outbuildings	No
Prohibited Uses May Be Permitted	No
Incorporated Plan	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

References

Bennett, G. 1993. *Portland Then and Now*. Gwen Bennett: Portland

Birmingham, FW. 1853 *Map of the town of Portland in the Colony of Victoria*. Surveyed and etched on stone and published by Frederick William Birmingham.

Victorian Heritage Database (VHD). 2008. Former Portland Inn, 4 Percy Street, Portland, retrieved 3 June 2016 from <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/13038>

Victorian Heritage Database (VHD). 1993. The St Ronan's Heritage Precinct retrieved 6 June 2016 from <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/24248#sthash.19xGnfCG.dpuf>

Wilson Sayer. 1981. *Portland Urban Conservation Study*. Commissioned by the Township of Portland and the Department of Planning.

This information is provided for guidance only and does not supersede official documents, particularly the planning scheme. Planning controls should be verified by checking the relevant municipal planning scheme.