Precinct name:	Darling Street, Moonee Ponds
Addresses:	30-54, 51-81 Darling Street, Moonee Ponds
Place Typology:	Residential
Construction date range:	Circa 1888-1895
Architectural style:	Late Victorian
Assessment:	heritage ALLIANCE, May 2021
Recommendation:	To be included in the schedule to the heritage overlay

Photo of places:



67 Darling Street, Moonee Ponds. Photographs, heritage ALLIANCE, May 2021



34 Darling Street, Moonee Ponds. Photographs, heritage ALLIANCE, May 2021



79 Darling Street, Moonee Ponds. Photographs, heritage ALLIANCE, May 2021



40 Darling Street, Moonee Ponds. Photographs, heritage ALLIANCE, May 2021

Statement of Significance:

What is significant?

Darling Street Precinct consists of Late Victorian cottages at 30-54 and 51-81 Darling Street. All the cottages were built in a very short period of time and are representative of a land boom era subdivision by Sir Thomas Bent, known as Bent's Paddock. The 30 houses in the precinct were sold during the land boom of the late 1880s and were all constructed by 1895. Contributory elements in the precinct include:

Late Victorian cottages (ca.1888-1895):

- Single storey, free-standing double or single fronted timber cottages (brick exception at number 32).
- Ashlar timber boarding to front.
- Hipped roof forms clad with corrugated iron or slate; some have been altered with Colorbond, tile or painted iron.
- Single fronts have central rendered chimneys; double cottages have two chimneys in face brick or render.
- Front verandahs are generally hipped, convex or bullnose in iron. Cast-iron decoration in frieze and brackets, some Corinthian columns and some turned timber posts. Raised verandahs have cast-iron balusters.
- Front doors are to the side for single fronted and central for double fronted; moulded timber with fanlights and sidelights.
- Timber-framed double-hung sash windows, in either pairs or with sidelights.
- Front fences constructed of timber picket.
- Small front gardens and similar setbacks.
- Nature strips with lawn, large paperbark trees and basalt kerb and channel.

Address	Street	Status
30	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
32	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
34	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
36	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
38	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
40	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
42	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
44	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
46	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
48	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Non-Contributory
50	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Non-Contributory
51	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
52	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
53	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
54	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
55	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
57	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
59	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
61	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Non-Contributory
63	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
65	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
67	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
69	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
71	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
73	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
75	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
77	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory

79	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory
81	Darling Street Moonee Ponds	Contributory

How is it significant?

Darling Street Precinct is of local historic and architectural (representative) significance to the City of Moonee Valley.

Why is it significant?

Darling Street Precinct demonstrates the residential development of Moonee Ponds during the land boom era of the late nineteenth century and the early subdivision known as Bent's Paddock. This subdivision was developed during the 1880s and 1890s by Sir Thomas Bent who was the most well-known of the early land speculators in the area. The Late Victorian houses are almost universally timber with ashlar timber boarding to the fronts, hipped roofs and ornate verandahs with cast-iron frieze, balusters and brackets. The houses are so uniform in design and materiality that they may have been built speculatively by only one or two builders. (Criterion A)

The consistency of the housing form in the street, the similar setbacks, decorative schemes and level of intactness, the appealing street trees and basalt kerb and channel makes this street stand out from others in this same historic subdivision. It is representative of a Late Victorian boom-era residential subdivision in Moonee Ponds, with high integrity and a high degree of architectural homogeneity. (Criterion D)

Description:

The contributory houses of this precinct are in two primary forms; single fronted late Victorian timber cottages or double fronted late Victorian timber cottages. The only exception is a single fronted bichrome brick cottage at number 32. On the east side of the street the even numbered houses are all single fronted and are elevated above street level with wooden steps up to the front verandah and enclosed underfloor spaces at the front.

On the east side of the street numbers 30, 42, 44 and 46 are all similar symmetrical single fronted hipped roof cottages with hipped verandahs to the front. Numbers 34, 36, 38 and 40 are asymmetrical with a stepped frontage with a verandah on two sides of the protruding front room, a recessed door to the side and a double hipped roof form. Number 32 is a single fronted bichrome brick cottage with a protruding party wall to one side, with altered roof and windows. All the other cottages have ashlar timber boarding to the front and a hipped corrugated iron or Colorbond verandah across the whole frontage. The exceptions are number 30 which has a skillion verandah and number 42 which has been greatly altered and it now appears to extend beyond the side wall of the house.

Cast-iron decoration is a big feature of all these houses with verandah frieze and brackets, some Corinthian columns, some turned timber posts and cast-iron balusters, both swag bellied and straight. Number 42 has had the cast-iron removed. Numbers 40, 38, 36 and 34 have a double hipped roof. Number 38 is very intact with the original slate roof with fish-scale pattern, central rendered chimney with ornate flue dividers and moulding and hipped iron verandah. Others have Colorbond or corrugated iron roofs and only 40 and 44 are missing a central chimney. Most have under eave timber brackets with ornate timber mouldings between and a cornice. Windows are either in pairs of timber double hung sashes or a single large double hung sash with sidelights. Doors are moulded timber with fanlights, sidelights and some have leadlight glass. There is great uniformity of setback, size, elevation and form on this side of the street.

The only non-contributory places on the east side are numbers 48 and 50. Number 48 is a brand new infill and number 50 is an Inter-war bungalow which is not significant to this late Victorian precinct.

On the west side of the street the level of intactness is lower than on the east, with a number of examples missing chimneys and overall a greater level of minor alteration. The form of the houses on this side is different, indicating a different builder, with plainer chimneys, and more variation of form.

Numbers 51, 55, 57, 59, 63, 65, 67, 71, and 77 are all single fronted late Victorian timber cottages with ashlar timber boarding to fronts and pairs of timber double hung sashes. They all have symmetrical fronts with a hipped roof, and hipped verandah across the front. Verandahs have cast-iron frieze, brackets and some have Corinthian columns or turned timber posts. Numbers 63 and 65 are asymmetrical with a double hipped roof and a verandah on two sides, with a door recessed to the side. Number 55 is the most intact with a slate roof, corbelled rendered chimney, mouldings, brackets and cornice below the eaves, hipped iron verandah, cast-iron frieze and patterned boards as quoining to the front.

Numbers 57, 67, 71, 75, 77, 79 and 81 have had alterations to their roofs, with the introduction of painted iron, Colorbond, tile or other materials. Replacing all these with galvanised iron in the future would greatly improve the values of this side of the street. Number 75 is the most altered with a glazed tile roof and a modified flat roofed brick arch porch to the front. The original eave brackets and cornice have been removed as has the chimney. The form of the house could be recovered as there are plenty of examples of restoration in the street. Number 81 has fake brick cladding over timber, a lower skillion verandah and all original decoration has been removed. The windows are new, but the original door remains. It is thought that the original form of the house could be restored.

Numbers 53, 69, 73, 79 and 81 are all double fronted timber cottages, with large double hung timber sash windows with sidelights. Numbers 53, 69 and 73 have a hipped projecting bay to the front and a part verandah. Numbers 79 and 81 are double fronted symmetrical cottages on larger allotments, with side driveways and crossovers. All except number 81 have timber under eave brackets, timber mouldings between the brackets and cast-iron frieze to the verandah.

The only non-contributory place on the west side is number 61 which was at some point a single fronted cottage but has now been reverse brick veneered and has a new flat verandah, windows and doors and is considered too altered to be recoverable.

All the houses have fairly low front fences, mostly timber picket, with very shallow front setbacks to the street.

Only 79 and 81 have crossovers which provide for parking to the side. At number 40 and 42 there is informal off-street parking in front gardens and a driveway between them which is shown as a vacant block on the *Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan* of 1905 and was probably always a double block attached to number 40.

There are six large specimen paperbark trees at the north end of the street and some new species have been introduced between these. The trees on the west side have been adversely impacted by overhead power lines. The missing trees on the east side should be replaced with the same species to improve the streetscape. There is basalt kerb and channel.

History:

Contextual History

City of Moonee Valley occupies part of the Traditional lands of the Wurundjeri-willam clan of the Woi-wurrung people. Many sites in the area now known as City of Moonee Valley show evidence of Woi-wurrung activities and spiritual connections. Fish were trapped in the rivers and creeks, stone was quarried from the river edges, murnong daisy was collected and kangaroos hunted across grassland areas, and bark was harvested from trees in the river valleys. This relationship between the Woi-wurrung and the land, water, animals and plants, continues to this day (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.29).

The first Europeans to explore the area known as Moonee Valley was a surveyor, Charles Grimes in 1803. In 1836, settlers moving from Van Diemen's Land crossed the area in the hope of finding empty, cheap and plentiful land for sheep. By 1842, surveyors had created the first map of the Parish of Doutta Galla and then Woi-wurrung lands were offered for sale by the British Crown to Europeans (noting that the land was never ceded). The Wurundjeri were moved off their land which had a profound impact on their culture, health and language. By 1860, the entire parish was sold (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.32-33).

Early development of the area began with the goldrush period of the 1850s which saw Mount Alexander Road used as a thoroughfare to the diggings with over 30,000 people estimated as moving along the dirt road each week. Businesses and

shops sprang up providing sustenance, transport and accommodation to service the passing gold rush trade. Some very early wayside hotels and shops still survive from this period (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.51-54).

After the heady days of the goldrush, the 1860s saw Essendon, Ascot Vale, Moonee Ponds and Flemington develop into permanent townships. The development of railways by private companies gave huge impetus to suburban development of the area with the opening of the Essendon railway in 1860. The government purchased the line in 1868. Suburban trains terminated at Essendon, and it wasn't until 1889 that Ascot Vale, Moonee Ponds and Newmarket stations were completed. By 1893 stations opened at Strathmore and Pascoe Vale and in 1922 Glenbervie Station opened. The railways provided an enormous boost to residential development along the line and those who had previously moved to areas without trains, now clamoured for them (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.59).

By the 1880s, Essendon had become a Borough and by 1891 had a population of 14,411. Many subdivisions occurred during the land boom of the 1880s and many failed to eventuate due to the depression of the 1890s. In the interwar period a boom in subdivision and residential development occurred in Travancore, Essendon, Ascot Vale, Strathmore and Moonee Ponds, which was focused on new transport routes along the tram lines, first established to Essendon in 1905. In 1919 the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board was formed and lines were extended and improved. The tram lines saw development occur either side of Maribyrnong Road, further along Mt Alexander Road, Buckley Street and Keilor Road (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.65-68, p.115).

In the three decades after the Second World War, Melbourne's suburbs ballooned outward to cater for post-war migration, the baby boom, an increasing need for new housing, and a more car-centred economy. Areas to the north of Essendon had been open paddocks in 1945, but by 1950 the Shire of Keilor found themselves with a developing suburb with no name. It was later called Niddrie. Similarly, Airport West was developing quickly with houses being built before the roads. By 1964 it was claimed that Airport West had the cheapest cream brick veneers in Melbourne (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.120-121).

Many houses in these post-war areas were austere weatherboard or brick veneer bungalows, with a few scattered architect designed or project homes on new blocks, particularly along the Boulevard in Aberfeldie. These post-war housing areas were car-centred communities located close to industry along Keilor Road, Matthews Avenue around Essendon Airport and East Keilor. By 1960 Airport West had its first hotel, the famous Skyways Hotel and then in the 1970s the first shopping centre, owned by Westfield was begun (heritage ALLIANCE, *Gap Heritage Study*, 2005, p.28-30).

Post-war housing pressure also saw a huge investment by the Housing Commission of Victoria who developed 150 bungalows in concrete, weatherboard and brick in Aberfeldie. They then began an ambitious estate of houses and flats on a 77 acre site at Ascot Vale in 1949. These low-rise walk-up flats eventually gave rise to the high-rise flats of Flemington. The first 20 storey tower block at Debney Park was officially opened in June 1965. It was the tallest prefabricated concrete housing block in Australia at the time and accommodated 700 people (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.123).

Many post-war migrants bought or built houses in the outer areas of the municipality, close to employment and industry and where new, cheaper housing was readily available. These developments and public housing in Aberfeldie, Ascot Vale and Flemington have had a long lasting effect on the nature of the Moonee Valley community which today is one of the most diverse and vibrant in Melbourne (Living Histories, *Thematic Environmental History*, 2012: p.124).

Place History

The northern portion of Darling St was rapidly developed in the late 1880s and early 1890s (Context, *2015 Heritage Study*: p.93) This land was subdivided during the peak of the land boom, c1888-89, by Sir Thomas Bent's Bent Land Co., also referred to as Bent's Paddock (*The Age*, 9 Jan 1889, p.2; *North Melbourne Advertiser*, 18 Aug 1888, p.3) The southern portion of the street, likely starting from no. 24 Darling Street, was a subdivision of the Doutta Galla Estate (*Plan of the Doutta Galla Estate,* ca.1880, State Library of Victoria).

Bent was one of the best-known land speculators during this period, later serving as the Victorian State Premier (Weston Bate, "Sir Thomas Bent," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*). Bent was notable in the region for laying the first rail of the Essendon and Flemington Tramways System, as well as donating the land that would become Maribyrnong Park (R.W. Chalmers, *The Annals of*

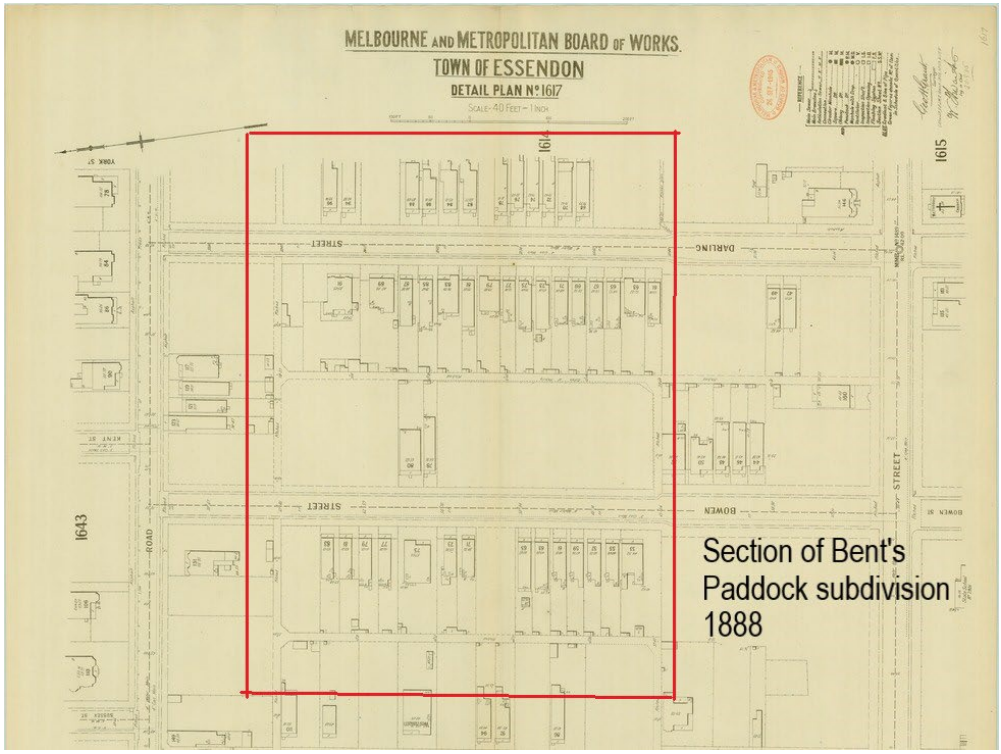
Essendon, 1998: p.100; p.108) Advertisements for the area highlighted the close proximity of these allotments to Moonee Ponds Station, being an approximate 7 minute and within the distance of two state schools (*The Age*, 14 Nov 1891, p.3).

Land in Darling Street appeared to be particularly valuable to buyers in this period, with an advertisement for the Ascot Vale Bazaar and Art-Union listing two lots as top prizes in a raffle, carrying values of £250 and £237 (*North Melbourne Advertiser*, 3 January 1890, p.5). The lots referred to were most likely located in the northern section of Darling Street, as the listing notes that the top prize is adjoining the land of G. Woodruff. This was likely a mistype and referred to James Woodruff who lived on the corner of Darling and Eglinton Streets at 146 Eglinton Street (Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Plan no. 1617, 1905; *The Essendon Gazette*, 10 June 1915, p.2). No other Woodruff was identified as living in the area at the time.

However, residents of Darling Street argued that the municipality could "increase the value of the holdings ten-fold" by extending the main drain to the Maribyrnong (*North Melbourne Advertiser*, 21 Sept 1889, p.2). As urban development increased, so too did run-off resulting in a "swamp at the foot of Holmes Road," with which Darling Street intersected. (HO385; Context, *2015 Heritage Study*: p.72). An application was made by the Essendon Town Council to the Commissioner of Public Works for assistance in extending the main drain with estimated costs at £6,000. (*The Argus*, 7 May 1891, p.7) That same year, a proposal to reticulate Darling Street was passed as some residents grew frustrated with the issue. Correspondence from John Rowe requested council return £1 9s 6d for the channelling of Darling Street as he considered "he was as much entitled to the use of the money as Council pending the commencement of the work in question (*North Melbourne Advertiser*, 17 April, p.4)." By 1896, the situation was remedied when Council awarded a contract to Messrs. Woodruff and Crosbie to extend the main drain along Holmes Road to the Maribyrnong (*The Argus*, 14 Jan 1896, p.6) Note, this is the same Woodruff living at the corner of Eglinton and Darling Street (*The Essendon Gazette*, 10 June 1915, p.2; Probate, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 28/P4, 140/453).

Darling Street's development reached its peak in the early 1890s, near the end of the land boom. According to Sands & McDougall, the earliest houses were constructed between 1888 and 1890 along the street's west (Sands & McDougall, 1890). It is likely these four houses were nos. 42, 44, 46, and the now redevelopment no. 48 (Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Plan no. 1617, 1905; Sands & McDougall, 1890; 1893). Development of the street was largely concentrated in the years between 1891-93. During this period, five more houses were constructed along the western side (nos. 30, 34, 36, 38 and 40) while the eastern side was almost fully developed with 18 new constructions by 1892 (Sands & McDougall, 1892; 1893). However, development came to a sharp halt with the crash of the land boom in 1893 (Michael Canon, *The Land Boomers*, 1966: p.21). Only one house was constructed in the following decade along this portion of Darling Street, no. 32 (ca.1899), reflecting the economic realities of the time (Sands & McDougall, 1899). The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works plan in 1905, with the exception of 32 Darling Street, reflects this stagnation and shows vacant lots where later infill would occur *(Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Plan no. 1617*, 1905).

Residents of Darling Street also felt the effects of the crash, with many declaring insolvencies in the latter half of the 1890s. While some, like Matthew Boswell, were simply out of work, others, like Richard Waters of 79 Darling Street, experienced the full effect of the housing bust citing the "depreciation in the value of real estate" as the primary cause of their insolvency (*The Argus*, 16 May 1895, p.5; *The Argus*, 30 May 1894, p.5).



Part of Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Plan no. 1617, 1905, showing the extent of Bents Paddock subdivision. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works plan shows the contributory properties of Darling Street as constructed.

Sources:

Primary Sources

The Age
The Argus
The Essendon Gazette
Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Plans, State Library of Victoria
North Melbourne Advertiser
Plan of the Doutta Galla Estate, ca.1880, State Library of Victoria
Probates, Public Record Office Victoria
Sands & McDougall Directory

Secondary Sources

Context, *2015 Heritage Study*
Michael Cannon, *The Land Boomers*, 1966
R.W. Chalmers, *The Annals of Essendon*, 1998
Weston Bate, "Sir Thomas Bent," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

Thematic Context:

City of Moonee Valley Thematic Environmental History, 2012

2. Peopling Victoria's places and landscape
   - 2.7 Promoting settlement
6. Building Towns, Cities, and the Garden State
   - 6.7 Making Homes for Victorians

Comparative Analysis:

Residential precincts in Moonee Ponds are quite common. Many are mixed-era with housing from Victorian, Federation and Inter-war periods. This section of Darling Street was constructed in a ten-year period during the land boom of the 1880s and was completed just before the 1890s depression. This makes the precinct incredibly homogenous architecturally, and has a very uniform and appealing streetscape with similar setbacks, fencing and materiality.

Darling Street is located in a section of Moonee Ponds with fewer Heritage Overlays (HOs) than other areas of the municipality. Due to the nature of suburban development in Moonee Ponds, those earlier areas with more HOs are located close to the railway line or the tramways on Union Road or Maribyrnong Road.

The housing in this section of Darling Street is unusually intact with high levels of integrity, good streetscape qualities and a consistency of form. Comparative precincts with a late Victorian character include HO309 and HO464 which are also located in Moonee Ponds.

	All photos Google Streetview
HO464 which includes 1-27 & 2-20 Grace Street, Moonee Ponds, is comparable to the proposed precinct in Darling Street. The property shown in the accompanying photo is 11-13 Grace Street and is very similar to the single fronted Victorian cottages in Darling Street. The small Grace Street precinct of 24 houses has both semi-detached and free-standing houses with new infill and houses from the Victorian to Inter-war period. Darling Street has better streetscape qualities, greater uniformity of design and higher architectural values than HO464 and is therefore a good contender for the HO.	
HO309 which includes 1-27, 2-26 Learmonth and 1-61 Winchester Street, Moonee Ponds, is comparable to the proposed Darling Street precinct. The single fronted cottages found in the precinct are comparable in design and materiality to Darling Street and have a similar level of integrity of fabric and streetscape values. Similar to Darling Street, the precinct has few non-contributory buildings and is very intact.	
Bowen Street is not included in the Heritage Overlay Schedule even though it is located very close to Darling Street and was developed as part of the same Bent's Paddock subdivision. It demonstrates a lesser level of integrity to Darling Street overall with more in-fill and more intrusive changes to housing such as over-size second storey additions. It is a good comparison which shows the unusual integrity of Darling Street and the reasons it makes a good case for the HO.	

Recommendation:

That the Darling Street precinct be included in the heritage overlay schedule to the extent of the mapping below.

Schedule:

External Paint Controls	Yes
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Solar Energy Controls	Yes
Fences and Outbuildings	No
Prohibited Uses	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place	No

Map:

