

28 Thomas Street, Mitcham

Proposal in regard to demolition and construction of a single house on an allotment



**heritage ALLIANCE** Conservation Architects and Heritage Consultants  
41 Cobden Street, North Melbourne, Victoria 30051, Australia Tel: 03 9328 5133 Fax: 03 9328 5144 Email: [contact@heritagealliance.com.au](mailto:contact@heritagealliance.com.au)  
AEN 23 308 903 865

#### Introduction:

It is proposed to demolish the existing single storey timber house at 28 Thomas Street and develop a single house on the allotment. The land lies within a heritage overlay (HO179) and the Whitehorse City Council has sought advice on matters relating to the proposed demolition and replacement building and has also required a documentary set of photographs of the place.

The latter requirement was fulfilled in early 2016.

#### The new proposal:

- ) The new proposal is for a large single storey house constructed with a corrugated metal roof and a combination of timber ply planking, timber vertical strip battens on the front façade along with metal cladding at the entry portico. Final choices on cladding appearance is yet to be determined and will be part of a subsequent submission.

#### Requirement for a permit:

A planning permit is required for construction of a dwelling in NRZ4 (informal bush zone) and Heritage Overlay HO179. The requirements of the Zone Control and the heritage overlay must be met.

While the zone control for NRZ4 specifies objectives, it is the Heritage Overlay which will create modifications of the form of building and placement to best match the surrounding HO179 context and this will have impacts on how the building looks from the street. Street appearance is important in achieving a permit from the City of Whitehorse.

The Thomas Street Precinct: City of Whitehorse authored Statement of Significance for HO179

##### What is significant?

The Thomas Street heritage precinct, comprising the properties with a frontage to Thomas Street including houses, other buildings, elements, fences and fabric remaining from the late Edwardian and inter-war periods.

##### How is it significant?

The Thomas Street heritage precinct is of local historic and aesthetic significance to the City of Whitehorse.

##### Why is it significant?

The Thomas Street heritage precinct is of aesthetic and historical significance to the City of Whitehorse a good expression of the major growth in housing in Mitcham during the Edwardian era and particularly the immediate post World War One era, as expressed by single storey detached largely Californian Bungalow style housing (Criterion A4 & Criterion E).

The Thomas Street heritage precinct is of historical significance as it represents the transition period in which the Mitcham area developed from a rural township to a more suburban township after electrification of the railway line and the expansion of the civic centre. The street is typical of the type of housing found in Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham constructed during the major development years of those suburbs. This boom development was then carried into the suburbs of Mont Albert, Surrey Hills and Box Hill, which are all closer to the city (Criterion A, C2)

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987  
WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME

22/05/2018

ADVERTISED MATERIAL

CITY OF WHITEHORSE

This copied document is made available for the sole purpose of enabling its consideration and review as part of a planning permit under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The document must not be used for any purpose which may breach copyright.

The Thomas Street heritage precinct has aesthetic and historical significance as an intact streetscape of late Edwardian and inter-war housing. It is rare to find such an intact precinct in the outer suburbs of the City of Whitehorse. The houses in the street are good representative examples of the more humble and working class houses of the late Edwardian and inter-war housing styles. (Criterion A4, E) The street is of aesthetic significance as it contains houses with similar set backs, materials, forms and levels of detailing giving the streetscape a consistent and unified appearance. (Criterion E)

**Comment:**

Many of the houses on the east side of Thomas street appear to have been built in the interwar period (mid 1910s-1920s) and some have the appearance of being based on the State Savings Bank models with No 13 Thomas Street appearing as if it is a SSB financed house as it is a re-scaled version of House type 9B in the SSB design book of 1929.

The MMBW plan of 1939 also shows all the houses along the east side of the street in an ordered alignment and given the street appearance of those houses, this (east) side of the street has the appearance of being developed between 1920 and 1929. This is unlike the west side where the subject site is to be found.

**What is 28 Thomas Street**

The 1939 MMBW plan for Thomas Street shows the site as vacant and interestingly all of the eastern side of the street is developed by consistent small houses (mentioned above) with large rear yards while the west side of the street has a scattering of houses with no consistent setbacks. The land at no. 28 was in 1939, one of a number of vacant allotments along Thomas Street.

The house at No 28 appears from on-site observation to be a post-World War Two building both in layout and detail.

It conforms to the style of houses published in the book Your House and How to Build It of 1955.

This was published by the Herald Sun (as Herald Gravure Publishers). Similarly houses at No 24 and 22 are also post WWII houses and conform to the model types published in 1955.

Published Melbourne postal directories (Sands & McDougall) show the subject site numbered for the first time in 1951 as a residential address for Reginal Martin. According to the National Australian Archives, Reginal Martin was engaged by the Army from 1939 to 1948. It would appear that he would have most likely constructed a house in 1950 when aged 28. As there was a general restriction on the release of building materials until 1955, Martin's war time service (presumably as a soldier) would have allowed him as a returned serviceman access to construction prior to the general public release date.

The year 1955 was the first year that building materials were fully released for public use after a decade of mandatory restraint caused by the War and the subsequent government imposition on materials which allowed industry to get back on its feet and to create a stockpile of timber, brick, tiles and asbestos cladding products although the latter was used less here than in New South Wales.

The offered layouts of houses were often a stripped down versions of the preceding years layouts (1930s) but constructed in a manner that gave opportunity to the can-do spirit that pervaded with the return of many servicemen who had acquired new practical skills while in service.

While some more contemporary house designs were offered, many of the buildings were still based on pre-war examples while interior features were still variants on features of the 1930s (decorative plasterwork, architectural hardware and fixtures such as pedestal sinks).

**Does 28 Thomas Street fit the precinct Statement of Significance or character?**

To the extent of the following characteristics the existing house fits within the characteristics of the area

- ) Setback
- ) Single storey
- ) Timbered exterior and timber framed windows
- ) Tiled roof
- ) Simple roofing arrangement (gabled)
- ) Chimney as a feature of the building

**PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987  
WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME**

**22/05/2018**

**ADVERTISED MATERIAL**

**CITY OF WHITEHORSE**

'This copied document is made available for the sole purpose of enabling its consideration and review as part of a planning permit under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The document must not be used for any purpose which may breach copyright.'

The critical issue is however the construction date and this is undoubtedly post WWII (being in this case circa 1950. This is outside the significance period attributed to the heritage precinct. Its architecture is also subtly different to others on the east side in that a new form of architecture is starting to make an appearance viz: flat porch roofs, small scale eaves and banks of windows which economise on timber framing.

Should demolition be allowed?

Given that the current house is neither an interwar house nor Edwardian (see MMBW plan, and construction type in Appendices), demolition is allowable under the heritage overlay. Demolition might also be seen in the context of the adjacent houses - No 30 which has substantially been extended and No 26 being a complex of brick flats (1960s or later) which is not contributory to the heritage overlay.

No 28 does not sit between a group of similar post war houses nor a group of pre-war houses.

David Wixted  
Principal Architect  
28 December 2017

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987  
WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME

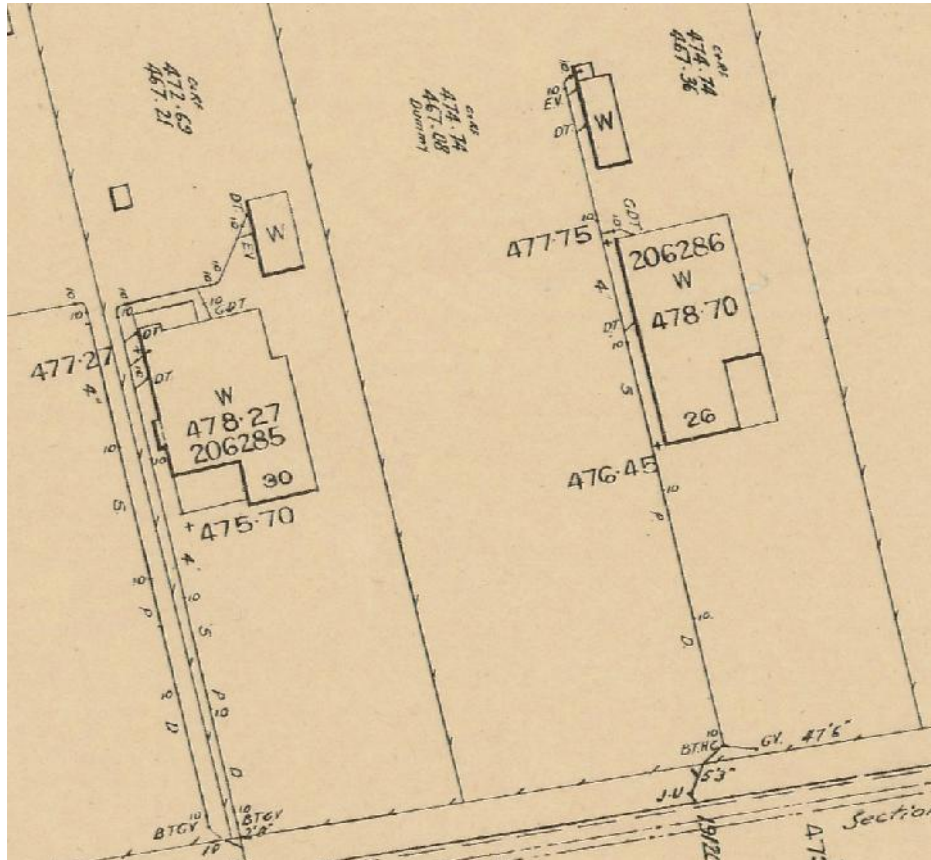
22/05/2018

ADVERTISED MATERIAL

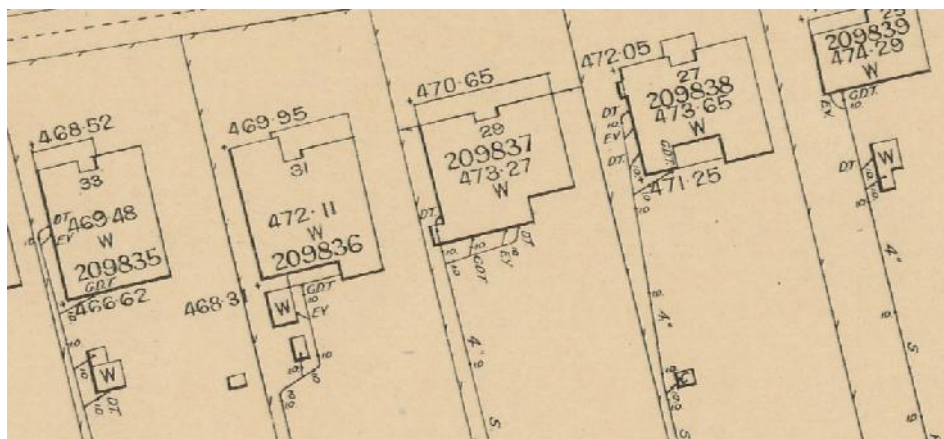
CITY OF WHITEHORSE

'This copied document is made available for the sole purpose of enabling its consideration and review as part of a planning permit under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The document must not be used for any purpose which may breach copyright.'

## APPENDIX 1: MAPS OF THOMAS STREET



Vacant Site of 28 Thomas Street in 1939 (west side) Source MMBW Plan 1939.



Houses on east side of Thomas Street in 1939 showing a similarity of setback and stylization. Source MMBW Plan 1939.

### PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987 WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME

22/05/2018

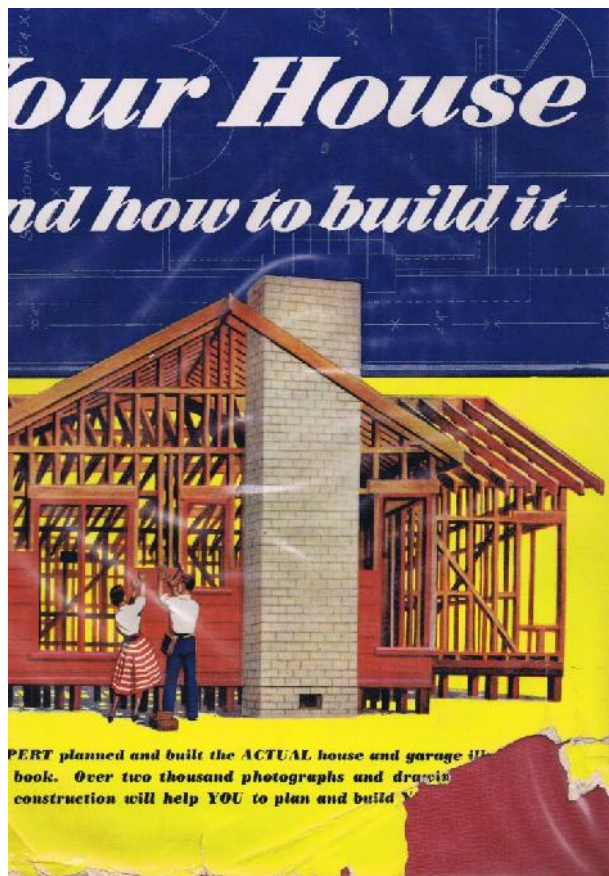
ADVERTISED MATERIAL

CITY OF WHITEHORSE

'This copied document is made available for the sole purpose of enabling its consideration and review as part of a planning permit under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The document must not be used for any purpose which may breach copyright.'

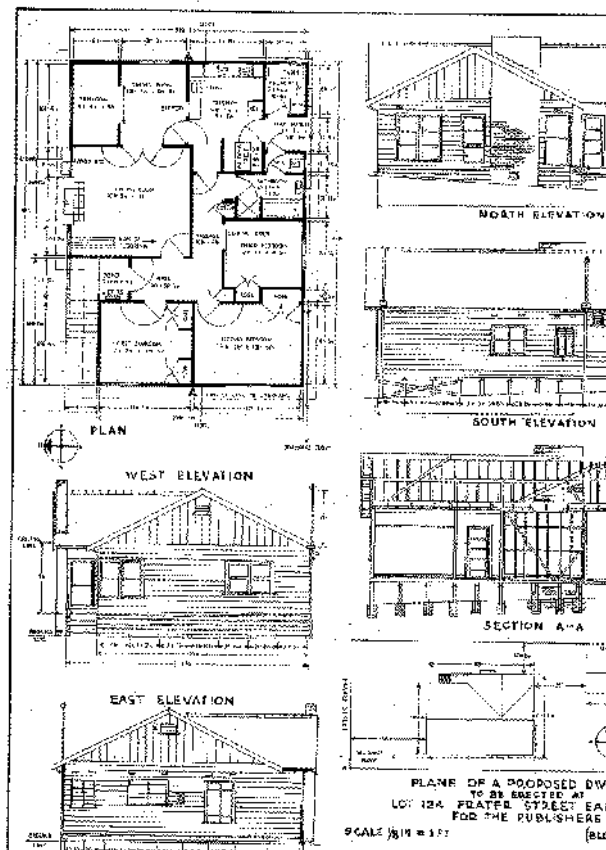


## APPENDIX 2: HOUSE PLANS OF POST WWII PERIOD



Your House and How to Build it (Melbourne 1955)

This book shows the construction details for houses such as 28 Thomas Street. The cover illustrated here shows a house near similar in a number of aspects to Thomas Street. (Chimney with low level top, timber frame construction, timber weatherboards, roof type and shape and so on. Some houses of this format had already been constructed from the 1950s, particularly for those who had served in WWII.



Plans from Your House and How to Build it (Melbourne 1955)  
Showing the construction details of the cover house illustrated above. This illustration shows some proximity in construction terms to the house at 28 Thomas Street.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987  
WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME

22/05/2018

ADVERTISED MATERIAL

CITY OF WHITEHORSE

'This copied document is made available for the sole purpose of enabling its consideration and review as part of a planning permit under the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The document must not be used for any purpose which may breach copyright.'