

City of Kingston Heritage Study Place Identification Form (2001)

Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd
19 Victoria Street, St Kilda 3182, Australia

Address/Location of Place Lower Dandenong Road, Braeside.	Type of Place Parkland and Buildings.
Name of Place Braeside Park.	Alternate Name(s) of Place None.

Listings and Controls

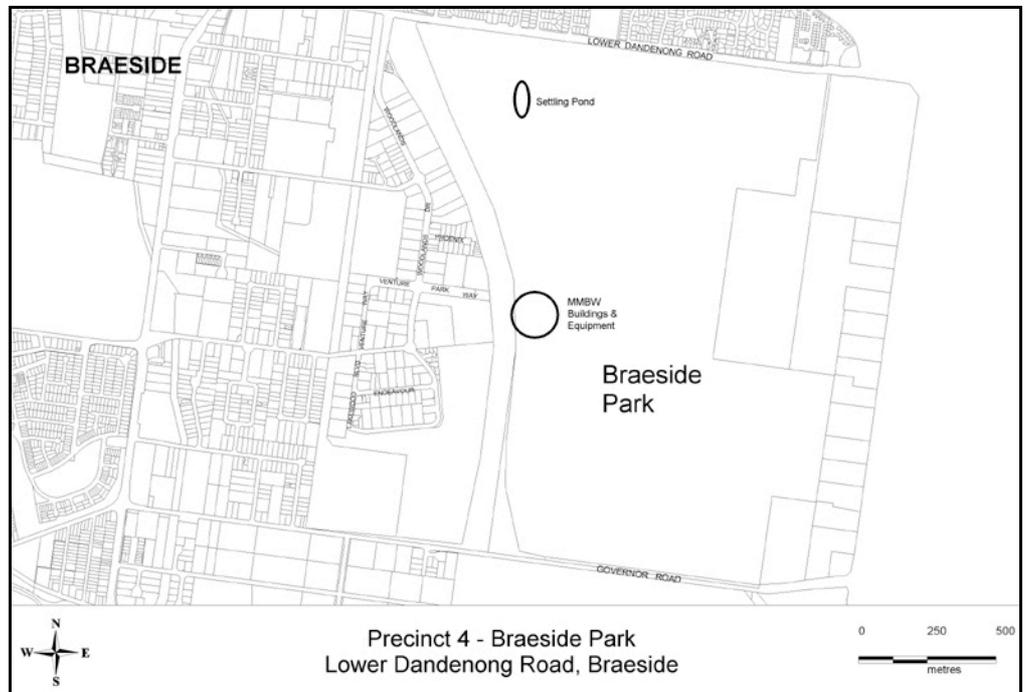
Victorian Heritage Register
Yes No

Register of the National Estate
Yes No

Register of the National Trust (Victoria)
Yes No

Construction Date
From 1880s

Source
Refer History



History and Description

Braeside Park covers an area of around 312 hectares and extends from Lower Dandenong Road to Governor Road. It is currently a public recreational space operated by Parks Victoria.

The area was once home to the Boon Wurrang (also spelt Boonwerwung or Bunurong) people who occupied an area from Mordialloc to the Anderson Inlet on Westernport Bay, including the Mornington Peninsula and inland to land near Warragul. Six scar trees on the site are evidence of their occupation.¹ The early explorers Hume and Hovell traversed the Carrum Carrum Swamp area in February 1827. The first Europeans to settle in the area included Michael Solomon and his family who arrived in 1840. Other settlers such as Farquar McCrae, CLJ De Villiers, Major James Fraser and James Horsfall quickly followed. Solomon became insolvent in 1842 and Charles and James Lomax Beswicke took over part of the run, which included the current Braeside Park area. They held the license for two years until George Keys took over in 1844. When the government revoked squatting licenses in 1851 George Keys was given the opportunity to purchase some of the land that he had previously worked.²

Today, Braeside Park covers most of the original three allotments purchased by members of the Keys family, namely, Lot 1 & 2 of Section 21 and Lot 2 of Section 22.³ The Keys were a highly influential family in the area who owned large tracts of land from the Carrum Swamp to Brighton. Robert Keys, one of the first co-owners of Braeside Park, also owned the Exchange Hotel at Cheltenham and was active in local politics.⁴ Over time the Keys sold their land with Lot 2 Section 22 going to David Syme in 1902 and Lot 1 Section 21 to Syme's son, Arthur Edward Syme in 1915. David Syme is remembered as the owner of *The Age* newspaper. His son Arthur was a surgeon. With David Syme's death, Arthur became owner of the entire parcel of land. Lot 2 Section 21 was extensively subdivided and had been divided into four different allotments by c.1900. It appears that two of these were purchased by Frederick William Werrett, who used the land for market gardening purposes.⁵

Dr Arthur Syme developed his land as a large racehorse training complex located near the corner of Springvale Road. He constructed stables for 20 horses, quarters for his employees, a grass track and a sand track. His trainer, Adam Skirving, lived in the residence built by the Keys. There was a bungalow for the foreman, a bunkhouse for other employees, a shower house and various outbuildings for storage of equipment.⁶ Syme and Werrett sold their properties to the MMBW in 1928.⁷

History and Description (continued)

The MMBW had planned to construct a new sewage treatment plant to service the suburbs to south and east of Melbourne. Opposition to the scheme quickly emerged with people worried that outfall from the scheme would pollute Port Phillip Bay and become a threat to health.⁸ However, due to protests and the depression⁹ work did not commence immediately and the MMBW offered the land to tenants. The tenants included horse trainer Harry Telford who occupied the former Syme property and market gardener Frederick Werrett who leased back the property (part of Lot 2 Section 21) that he had sold to the MMBW. Telford paid £800 per year to use the facilities constructed by Syme. He employed 25 people as gardeners, farmhands, stable boys and apprentices. Telford is famous as the trainer of 1930 Melbourne Cup winner Phar Lap, who trained on the site for a small period during in 1930/31. In 1940 Ernest John Willmott took over the lease on the horse training section of the property. Willmott and his family lived in the Keys residence which had at this stage been extended from the original four rooms. Other elements on the property included the Canadian cedar stables, an underground tank, four raised water tanks, milking sheds and other buildings. During this period, an extensive garden with varieties of fruit trees and ornamental plants occupied a part of the site.¹⁰

To ease pressure on the Werribee sewage treatment plant, the MMBW commenced construction of a facility at Braeside park in 1939. The plant was built mostly by day labour and opened by then Premier, Edwin Dunstan in October 1940. It was initially designed to cope with sixteen thousand people but later expanded to service around 60 thousand people.¹¹ The sewage was biologically treated using a series of tanks and lagoons. Raw sewage was filtered through crushed rock in concrete holding tanks near the pump house. Then the effluent was purified before being evaporated from lagoons.¹² Or the purified effluent was used to irrigate the surrounding MMBW owned land. The land was leased for sheep grazing. This type operation was common throughout the world during the interwar years.¹³

Higher than expected population growth after WWII forced revision of the city's sewerage scheme. Various feasibility studies began including a scheme to pump untreated sewage from a pumping station at Carrum into the ocean at Cape Schanck. This scheme was rejected in favour of constructing a new pumping station at Brooklyn and enlargement of the Braeside and Outfall Sewer operations.¹⁴ In the mid 1950s Braeside was expanded and small neighbourhood treatment plants were constructed. However confined growth placed a strain on the sites. In 1964 the board decided to build a major treatment plant near Carrum to treat all sewage from the eastern zone. Construction was delayed until the late 1960s due to financial constraints and the need for investigation of the environmental and health issues.¹⁵ This new plant eventually made Braeside obsolete.¹⁶ The Braeside treatment plant eventually closed in 1980.¹⁷

With the Braeside sewage treatment plant (and several others) decommissioned, various future uses were suggested by community groups. The MMBW decided to develop the area as a public park and nature reserve, preserving remnant MMBW buildings and other MMBW sites.¹⁸ It was anticipated that the park would create an urban escape of open spaces and landscape features while protecting natural areas. Around 770 acres were developed as a park¹⁹ which opened in April 1989.²⁰ The former Keys residence was demolished and the stables were destroyed by fire in 1982.²¹

This is a very large site, which is used as a public park. It is largely covered with native or replanted vegetation. The site has an avenue of large pine trees, which was planted in the late 1930s along the entrance avenue to the Pumping Station. The original pumping station building (c.1939) is used by the park staff as an office. This building is constructed from red brick in a Streamlined Moderne style. It features brick quoins, a parapeted gable with brick detailing and strong horizontal emphasis. The building has new some windows. Other sites of interest include a remnant settling pond with concrete outlet and inlets in place, a substation, some pumping machinery, the former MMBW Chlorine Store and Surveyors Markings. Several new buildings have been erected on the northern side of the park for public use and interpretation of the site. A permanent installation dealing with the issue of Aboriginal reconciliation has been erected beside the remnant settling pond.

- 1 Context Pty Ltd. *Braeside Park Cultural Values Assessment Review, July 2002*, p.1, 15.
- 2 Context Pty Ltd. p.3.
- 3 *Mordialloc, County of Bourke* Crown Portion Subdivision Map. First Edition 8th December 1884 and *Mordialloc, County of Bourke* Crown Portion Subdivision Map, Second Revised Edition, c.1900.
- 4 Graham Whitehead, Personal Communication, 1 November 2002.
- 5 Graham Whitehead, Personal Communication, 29 October 2002.
- 6 Kingston Historical Website. <http://localhistory.kingston.vic.gov.au> 'A Racing Establishment at Braeside' by Graham J Whitehead.
- 7 Kingston Historical Website.
- 8 T Dingle & C. Rasmussen. *Vital Connections*, 1990. p.161.
- 9 Kingston Historical Website.
- 10 Kingston Historical Website.
- 11 Sign on site near pumping station.
- 12 Sign on site near pumping station.
- 13 T Dingle & C. Rasmussen. p.200-201.
- 14 T Dingle & C. Rasmussen. p.216.
- 15 T Dingle & C. Rasmussen. p.293.
- 16 Sign on site near pumping station.
- 17 Parks Victoria. Braeside Park Website. <http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au>
- 18 Sign on site near pumping station.
- 19 T Dingle & C. Rasmussen. p.328.
- 20 Parks Victoria. Braeside Park Page.
- 21 Kingston Historical Website.

Integrity

Substantially Intact Altered Sympathetically Altered Unsympathetically Damaged/Disturbed

Comparable examples within the City of Kingston

No comparable examples were identified within the City of Kingston by this study. However, similar sites throughout the wider Melbourne metropolitan area retains large elements of former MMBW plants, including the Werribee Sewer and pumping stations.

Statement of Significance

Braeside Park is of historical and technological significance at a local level. Although substantially altered to provide Park and Wildlife habitat, it retains a number of early key elements of historical significance from its period as a pastoral property including the racetrack. It retains other elements from the period as an MMBW sewage treatment plant including settling basin, substation, and administration buildings that are of historical and some technological significance.

Recommendations

A heritage overlay is recommended for selected sites throughout the precinct including the former settling pond and associated outlet and inlet, former pumping station building, substation shed and other remnant MMBW equipment. There are ongoing discussions with Heritage Victoria and Parks Victoria to develop a more complete inventory of significant elements on the site.

A landscape assessment should be undertaken in conjunction with Parks Victoria to establish the significance of early plantings including the avenue of pines leading to the former pumping station building and to determine the necessity for planning scheme controls. Future works should refer to the recent Context Pty Ltd report undertaken on the park.

City of Kingston Planning Scheme

Recommended for inclusion in a heritage overlay to the Planning Scheme	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Should external paint controls apply?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Should internal alteration controls apply?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Should tree controls apply?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Other Listings and Controls

Recommended for inclusion on the Victorian Heritage Register?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Recommended for inclusion on the Register of the National Estate?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Recommended for inclusion on the National Trust (Victoria) Register?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Remnant MMBW infrastructure