

Recommendations

To conserve and enhance the special character of the Gray Street Commercial area it is recommended that:

- i post-supported verandahs be reinstated according to the age of the building and based on the photographic evidence available,
- ii the cladding which disguises the original facades be removed,
- iii replace, in the long term, brick paving with either bluestone flags, concrete flags or asphalt (hot mix),
- iv extend the street tree planting of Gray Street into neighbouring streets,
- v review the emphasis placed on access to Gray Street by car from the rear of the shopping centre and refocus the vitality of the area,
- vi review the pedestrian links between Gray Street and the carparks,
- vii reconstruct the original Town Hall.

5.2.4 UC1 Area D Hospital Hill (Level 3)

Description

The other hill in Hamilton, this area focuses on the Hamilton Hospital at its crest and on the Catholic Church, the Uniting Church and the Masonic Temple where it joins the Melville Oval area. The area is roughly triangular. Its main axis is Lonsdale Street. The area includes Bree Park. The western boundary is Alexandra Parade and the eastern boundary is the railway line.

Generally the quality of the housing stock is less than that of Church Hill but still good with some very good individual buildings, the best typically being on the brow of the hill. The Federation house at 138 Lonsdale Street is the most distinctive in the area and its tower acts as a landmark. The fully planted garden consists of a range of mature woody shrubs. The garden at St Mary's Convent at 23 Dinwoodie Street is typical of the post Second World War Period with a special formality which

reflects the building's style. There was little of special interest in the other private gardens of Hospital Hill, the gardens being typical of their period and true to the style of the houses. No notable trees were identified in private gardens. There is an avenue of *Picea abies*, Norway Spruce, in Dinwoodie Street near Sedgewick Street which is an unusual species to find in Hamilton let alone to find it used as a street tree.

The most important trees in the Hospital Hill area are in two avenues adjacent to the Uniting Church complex. The *Washingtonia robusta*, Mexican or Washington Palms, are already included on the Significant Trees Register. They must be seen in association with the palms in Melville Oval and in the garden at 6 Dryden Street. The unusual avenue of interplanted *Ulmus X hollandica*, Dutch Elms and *Eucalyptus citriodora*, Lemon Scented Gums, create a strong sense of axis along Lonsdale Street and link the Melville Oval area with the Hamilton Hospital.

Bree Park differs from other reserves in Hamilton in being largely planted with natives. The most dominant native species is *Eucalyptus ficifolia*, Red Flowering Gum planted in an avenue from one corner to the other. The most important single native is the *Acacia elata*, Cedar Wattle, a tree of large proportions but in poor condition. Other native trees noted were *Eucalyptus botryoides*, Bangalay Gum, *Grevillea robusta*, Silky Oak and *Acacia baileyana*, Cootamundra Wattle. The park had been substantially planted with *Acacia baileyana*, Cootamundra Wattle, but these were taken out due to poor health in the 1940s. The most dominant exotic species is *Pinus radiata*, Monterey Pine which is in an avenue near the Hamilton Hospital. Other exotic trees noted were *Quercus robur*, English Oak, *Cupressus macrocarpa*, Monterey Cypress, and *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Sycamore.

While there are patterns in the planting, no overall design can be determined. The character of the park is open and informal. The grass is rough, in contrast to the manicured lawns of the Botanic Gardens, but in poor condition. The paths are gravel and are also in poor condition. A simple, traditional post and rail fence delineates the boundaries. Play equipment, possibly for the use of people visiting the hospital, is located on the Foster Street side.

Cox Street requires special mention for its very low streetscape amenity. It suffers from the same blight as Lonsdale Street, being on the major through route for

traffic. There is no planting and the quality of the building stock, apart from a few houses, is poor. This must create a bad impression on people passing through Hamilton.

Generally views are not generated in the same way as those generated by the street grid in the Church Hill area. There are some dramatic views out of the Hospital Hill area especially towards the Grampians. The view over Hamilton Lake is less dramatic and is compromised by the railway line. The worst view is along Foster Street towards the railway line which is terminated by a large industrial building with oversized lettering.

History

The land east of Brown Street was sold in stages in the 1850s, in the 1860s and even in the 1880s. Those parts of the Hospital Hill which lie close to the centre of Hamilton were developed early but the further reaches only saw the Hamilton Hospital for many years on one rise and the Hamilton and Western District College on the next. The area was always predominantly domestic but was graced by some religious buildings, such as St Mary's which was started in the mid-1860s and the former Wesleyan Church which dates from 1907. St Mary's has been extended twice and altered at other times. The Freemasons' Temple was also built early in the twentieth century to the design of Worshipful Brother Frank Hammond. The foundation stone was laid in 1915. (294)

The Hamilton Hospital started in the early 1860s and has continued to develop ever since adding a new main building on the foundations of the old in 1890, a fever ward in 1897, an extension to the main building for the new female nurses early in the 1900s which was also designed by Hammond and several other major buildings throughout the twentieth century. The hospital played a key role in the eradication of tuberculosis with its TB Chalet built in 1947. The specially designed building was one of several sanatoria around the state of a similar design and appears to have been the first built. The Hamilton Hospital has also had a major influence on the street layout by assuming some road reservation for hospital purposes.

294 Foundation stone.

Much of the Hospital Hill area was developed during the interwar period with typical bungalows. These were the homes of the children who filled the nearby private and public schools especially after the Second World War. The area is now a consolidated suburb of Hamilton representing its middle class values.

Statement of Significance

The Hospital Hill area is of local significance for the collection of important buildings, including several landmarks, and for Bree Park. The spire of St Mary's rivals the spires of Church Hill. Like Church Hill, this area is another important residential part of Hamilton. It includes the home of Reg Ansett, a modest Californian bungalow at 12 Learmonth Street, and reflects his relatively humble beginnings. The Hamilton Hospital includes a wide range of purpose built buildings from different periods, the most dominant of which is the multi storey Princess Margaret Nurses Home. It is the tallest building in Hamilton.

Recommendations

To conserve and enhance the special character of the Hospital Hill Area it is recommended that:

- i the existing street plantings which date from before the Second world War be retained and extended in a comparable manner,
- ii traditional paving and guttering continue to be used including the absence of footpaths in some streets,
- iii a strict policy of minimal signage be followed,
- iv no non-residential uses should be allowed to compromise the essentially residential character of the area,
- v wherever possible the intrusion of powerlines should be minimised if they cannot be removed,
- vi the views out of the area should be enhanced by appropriate planting,
- vii the landscaping of Bree Park should be continued and consolidated,

iix Cox Street should be given special attention to improve its streetscape to better reflect the character of Hamilton and its importance as a through route.

5.2.5 UC1 Area A Melville Oval (Level 3)

Description

The focus for this Conservation Area is obviously the oval. The land, originally reserved for market purposes, was too swampy. About the turn of the century there were moves to improve the area. The beautification scheme included ground works, extensive planting and the construction of buildings, gates and a fence. The beautification scheme has been eroded over the years by ad hoc "improvements" most of which were the removal of plantings and to accommodate increased traffic.

Within the oval's grounds there are several notable trees. The most striking are the *Washingtonia robusta*, Mexican or Washington palms. These trees are landmarks and relate to the significant avenue of *Washingtonia robusta*, Mexican or Washington Palm, in Alexandra Avenue, one in the garden of The Bungalow, 8 Dryden Street, and to others elsewhere in the town. There are various other trees some of which are in very poor health, particularly the *Calodendrum capense*, Cape Chestnut, the only example found in Hamilton. On the other hand the *Waterhousea floribunda*, Weeping Myrtle, which is next to the Brown Street fence, is in good condition and could be used as a species for further planting. There are also two *Quercus robur*, English Oaks, which are reasonable. Improved planting along this side of the oval would benefit the streetscape. Because of the overhead powerlines the planting should be inside the Oval fence.

On the other side of the Oval, there is a drinking water fountain erected by the Caledonian Society in 1910 for children, no doubt prompted by the beautification scheme. It is surrounded by several trees; *Quercus palustris*, Pin Oak; *Prunus cerasifera* 'Nigra', Purple Cherry Plum and *Aesculus hippocastanum*, Horse Chestnut, the most notable tree in this part of the Oval. Other trees which are notable are a *Eucalyptus ficifolia*, Red Flowering Gum; the *Acmena smithii*, Lilly Pilly and *Arbutus unedo*, Strawberry Tree, either side of the Thompson Street memorial entrance gates.