

The Avenue Precinct Statement of Significance (GML Heritage, September 2025)

Heritage Place:	The Avenue Precinct	PS ref no:	HO1433
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What is significant?

The Avenue Precinct, including 36–54 Leonard Street, 8–20, 24–310 The Avenue, 30 Walker Street and Railway Bridge, Parkville developed from 1868 to 1983, is significant.

This document is an incorporated document in the Melbourne Planning Scheme pursuant to section 6(2)(j) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

- low-scale external form of buildings developed pre-World War I (typically one to three storeys), featuring original hipped and gabled roof forms (sometimes with parapets) of slate, corrugated iron or terracotta tiles and intact early chimneys, masonry construction and finishes (some painted and rendered), pattern and size of original fenestration, stylistically consistent detailing, early iron palisade fences on stone plinths and early timber picket fences; and
- low-scale external form of buildings developed from 1918 to 1945 (typically one to four storeys), featuring masonry or concrete construction and finishes (some painted and rendered), original gable, hip and flat roof forms (sometimes with parapets), intact chimneys, and the pattern and size of original fenestration, stylistically consistent detailing, and early low masonry fences and letterboxes; and
- the external form of post-1945 buildings (with varying heights), which typically have: masonry and concrete construction and finishes; original hipped, gabled and flat roof forms (sometimes with parapets); early chimneys; the pattern and size of original fenestration; stylistically consistent detailing; and early fences and landscaping (including masonry or stone fences, garden edging, garden beds or retaining walls); and
- significant buildings' high level of integrity to their original design; and
- early subdivision pattern, including the size of allotments, the setbacks of park-fronting properties, Mile Lane, the brick, bluestone and steel railway bridge on The Avenue that crosses the Inner Circle Rail Trail, and the views to and from Royal Park; and
- public space elements, including the street trees, width and shape of the asphalted footpaths and bluestone gutters in The Avenue and the bluestone paving and open central drainage line of Mile Lane; and
- early fences and landscaping contribute to the significance of the precinct; and
- early stable/outbuildings, garages and outdoor toilets (including openings for the collection of nightsoil) at 292, 260–270, 182–190, 172, 116–156 (corner Mile Lane and Walker Street), 14 The Avenue and 30 Walker Street (corner Mile Lane), also contribute to the significance.

More recent alterations and additions to significant and contributory places, including replacement fences, verandah and windows, are not significant.

Post-1984 developments and other extensively altered properties are not significant.

How is it significant?

The Avenue Precinct, Parkville, is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

The Avenue Precinct in Parkville is of historical significance as part of a residential subdivision of land that was formerly part of Royal Park. Land between Royal Parade and The Avenue was excised from Royal Park in 1868, as part of wider action by the Victorian Government to raise revenue by selling areas of public parklands in the City of Melbourne. The curve of The Avenue follows a former pathway or carriage drive within Royal Park. Designed for middle-class housing, the subdivision provided large blocks with frontages to both Royal Parade and The Avenue. Reducing the area of public parkland to enable residential development of the eastern strip of Royal Park drew strong public opposition. This was an important factor in the imposition of strict building regulations, which were likely partly an attempt to compensate for the loss of public space. A restrictive covenant on allotments specified the construction of specified villas and terrace houses in stone or brick, thereby to an extent determining the built form characteristics of early houses built in the precinct. This strict development code, and the relatively complete take-up of the blocks for housing by c1910, resulted in a unified residential strip on The Avenue of high-quality homes on large allotments, dating largely to the period 1873–1900. Many residences were designed by architects including Norman Hitchcock, Lloyd Tayler, and Charles Webb & Sons.

Many original Victorian-era residences have been retained, although several have subsequently been altered and some have had their original holdings reduced. Mile Lane, a bluestone laneway which runs between the two roads, also survives; this provided access to the night soil man and rear access to stables, coach houses and early outbuildings including evidence of previous night soil collection points where extant. A number of residences have been adapted for other uses, particularly for educational and religious purposes. (Criterion A)

The Avenue Precinct in Parkville is of historical significance for its interwar and postwar residential development. This occurred as a response to the demand for higher-density housing in the City of Melbourne and was facilitated by the large building allotments available in the precinct and responded to the demands for housing close to the University of Melbourne and the hospitals. Consistent with the earlier development of The Avenue, this later phase involved high-quality, architect-designed development that took advantage of available views over Royal Park. This included several blocks of flats built in the mid to late 1930s, and two high-rise towers built to the design of architect Ermin Smrekar. (Criterion A)

The Avenue Precinct is of aesthetic significance primarily as a prestigious residential area of mixed character that has developed and evolved from the 1870s through to the present day. This layering of development has resulted in the area having a rich combined architectural and streetscape character. This mixed character is unified by a general consistency in building quality, two to four storey height, uniform setbacks that generally follow the curve of The Avenue, materiality (predominantly brick), and a pattern of fenestration that harmonises buildings of different historical eras and architectural styles within a cohesive urban setting. The precinct's character is enriched by its public realm elements, which include the gentle curve of The Avenue that follows an early carriage drive of Royal Park, mature and semi-mature deciduous and evergreen trees, bluestone kerbs and guttering, asphalt footpaths and the bluestone-paved Mile Lane. Residential development is bookended by the 1888 brick, bluestone and steel rail bridge at its northern end and by a wedge-shaped landscape reserve set aside as part of the original 1868 subdivision. Throughout the precinct, oblique views are possible due to the generous side and front setbacks of many buildings. This allows buildings to be viewed three-dimensionally, including roofscapes of hip and gable roof forms clad with slate or terracotta combined with chimneys and parapets. The aesthetic quality of the precinct is further enhanced by its proximity to parklands, being bounded by Royal Park to its west. (Criterion E)

Aesthetically, the mixed-era precinct is significant for its high concentration of refined architect-designed buildings from across all development periods. This diverse building stock ranges from substantial single and two-storey Victorian Italianate villas and terrace rows, luxury interwar and postwar blocks of flats and townhouses, and postwar high-rise apartments. This, coupled with the general high quality of architectural design and materiality across the precinct, provides an unusually rich aesthetic quality to the precinct. (Criterion E)

Primary source

Parkville Heritage Review (GML Heritage, October 2023)

Street	Number	Property Name	Building Category	Significant streetscape
Street	Number	Property Name	Building Category	Significant streetscape
Leonard Street	36–54	Kenley Close	Contributory (36–38 The Avenue) Non-contributory (remainder of site)	Significant
The Avenue	8	Clunies Ross Reserve	Non-contributory	-
The Avenue	10–12	Chuzzlewit	Contributory	Significant
The Avenue	14	Yateley	Contributory	Significant
The Avenue	16		Contributory	Significant
The Avenue	18–20	Park Manor	Contributory	Significant
The Avenue	24–26	Lyndale	Significant	Significant
The Avenue	28–32	Sorella	Significant	Significant
The Avenue	40	St Finbar	Contributory	Significant
The Avenue	42	St Finbar	Contributory	Significant
The Avenue	44–52	Whitley College	Contributory	Significant
The Avenue	54–66	Park Lodge	Contributory	-
The Avenue	68–78		Significant	-
The Avenue	80–90		Non-contributory	-
The Avenue	92–102		Contributory	-
The Avenue	104–114	Kennethwood	Significant	-
The Avenue	116–156	Treacy Conference Centre	Significant (156 The Avenue) Contributory (116 The Avenue)	Significant (applies to both buildings)
The Avenue	160–162	Cumnock House	Significant	Significant (applies to both frontages)
The Avenue	164–166A	Ridley Terraces	Non-contributory	-
The Avenue	168–180		Significant (Stable building facing Mile Lane) Contributory (Low stone fence along The Avenue frontage) Non-contributory (Remainder of site)	-
The Avenue	182–190	Wannaeue	Significant	Significant
The Avenue	192–198		Significant	Significant
The Avenue	200–210		Non-contributory	-
The Avenue	212–222		Contributory	-
The Avenue	224–234	Arcadia	Non-contributory	-
The Avenue	236–246	Park Avenue Towers	Significant	Significant

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The Avenue	248–258		Significant	Significant
The Avenue	260–270		Significant	Significant
The Avenue	272	Oxford	Significant	Significant
The Avenue	274	Chelsea	Significant	Significant
The Avenue	276	Pimlico	Significant	Significant
The Avenue	278	Cambridge	Significant	Significant
The Avenue	280–292	Brentwood Court	Significant	Significant
The Avenue	294		Significant	Significant
The Avenue	296		Significant	Significant
The Avenue	298		Significant	Significant
The Avenue	300		Significant	Significant
The Avenue	302		Significant	Significant
The Avenue	304		Significant	Significant
The Avenue	306		Significant	Significant
The Avenue	308		Significant	Significant
The Avenue	310	Carinya	Significant	Significant
The Avenue	Railway Bridge	Railway Bridge	Contributory	-
Walker Street	30		Contributory	-