

Artwork: Kew Railway Station (1887-1958) by local artist Joy Stewart.  
A template for one of a series of tapestry panels depicting the history of Kew.  
Wool colour codes at left.  
Photo: Kew Historical Society

## Kew Historical Society

### Significance Assessment | Collection

**HISTORY AT WORK**  
Communities | Places | Collections

Report | August 2018

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<b>Schedule</b>		
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## Executive Summary

The Kew Historical Society (KHS) received a Community Heritage Grant from the National Library of Australia in 2017 for a significance assessment. The Grant was for three components of the overall collection: the costumes and textiles, the maps, and the pictures. However we also considered the collection as a whole as it provides the context and the companions for these three components.

The Society's Mission and Aims refer consistently to 'Kew and its environs' – this shapes the collection policy and all related documents and is an important driver in acquisition and deacquisition decisions. The collection is very broad, varied and has considerable depth and breadth thematically and temporally. There are a few items and sub-collections likely to be of national significance for their rarity or associations, however without extensive research into comparative items it is difficult to be sure of this. There are some highlights in the collection that have strong historical, research and aesthetic significance, and are supported by their rarity, integrity, condition and provenance. The most important of these are probably the collection of thirty-five coloured MMBW Borough of Kew Detail Plans, the MMBW River Yarra Beautification Scheme (1925) and the Contour Plan of Melbourne & Suburbs: Melbourne Sewerage (1894). The State Library of Victoria does not have copies of the latter two, nor of the first set of maps in this same coloured form. Indeed there does not appear to be any MMBW maps in Victorian collections these careful markings that reveal the building materials and some of the techniques of their era.

It is difficult however, and of little value to select one handful of items over another. There are also items in both the costume and the picture collection that are highlights, as well as items across the whole collection. Both the Society and its collection are extremely fortunate to have been guided over its long history by both enthusiasts and professionals who have given to it dedication, knowledge and passion.

The collection as a whole fulfills the criteria for strong historical, aesthetic and research significance at a local level. It also has some associations with state and national level figures and events.

The costume and textiles, map and picture collections each have very strong historical, research and aesthetic significance of their own accord. The degree of their significance is greatly enhanced by all of the comparative criteria: interpretive value, provenance, condition, integrity, rarity and representativeness.

## Purpose of Significance Assessments

A cultural heritage significance assessment is a tool for museums, archives, galleries, local history societies, libraries and individual collectors. Based on research and assessed against a set of criteria, the Statement of Significance goes beyond a catalogue description to the heart of why the collection is, or is not, important, and what stories it can tell about our history. Assessments will not cover issues of preservation, conservation and management.

When significance is a primary tool in a management strategy a collection can become truly a community asset by contributing to a deeper understanding and broader communication of our heritage. Assessments assist collection managers to inform and stimulate, and to generate empathy, understanding, dialogue and debate. They can help a collection's community and its visitors and users explore their connections with the past, and be more likely to inspire, teach and entertain. A significance assessment can also:

- promote awareness and discussion about the value of the collection;
- help to identify priorities in acquisitions, deaccessioning and exhibitions;
- help to focus resources and aid grant applications and funding arrangements;
- help review collection patterns, and consider strengths, weaknesses and scope;
- significance, rather than catalogue description, enhances the value for researchers.

The Kew Historical Society collection has never been assessed before, in whole or in part, and the Society requested this assessment for several reasons:

- to gain a better understanding of strengths and omissions after considerable efforts to reorganise the collection;
- expert advice has been sought on several occasions but an understanding of significance may help with decisions regarding storage, management and deacquisition;
- the Boroondara Council and three of the local historical societies – Kew, Camberwell and Hawthorn – are negotiating to move their collections and activities to a shared purpose built facility in the future. An Assessment will inform plans for the facility and its storage, conservation, exhibition and research requirements.

## Methodology

The assessment is primarily of the costumes, the maps, and the pictures, although the collection as a whole was considered as the context and companion to the three sub-collections. Two historians accredited by the Professional Historians' Association conducted the assessment using the methodology described in *Significance 2.0. A guide to assessing the significance of collections* (2009). It involved:

- several visits to the collection and discussions with the archivist and curator;
- research into the history of the collection and the history of Kew;
- consideration of the collection's ability to reflect its mandate; and
- its condition, completeness and integrity;
- a comparison with similar collections;
- consideration against *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*; and
- an assessment against the criteria described by *Significance 2.0*.

**Primary Criteria.** These evaluate the type(s) of significance. The collection must fulfill one of these primary criteria to be considered significant.

- Historical significance – a collection needs to demonstrate connections or associations with people, events, historical processes, places or themes; such collections may reflect a particular way of life; important industries; urban, municipal and social developments; or the passions and concerns of the people associated with the collection.
- Aesthetic significance – where a collection can demonstrate craftsmanship, a particular style, design or technical excellence, innovation, beauty or quality of execution.
- Scientific or Research significance – this requires a well-documented context and collecting history with firm provenance, which in turn allows researchers to verify or reinvestigate data or develop new research questions.
- Social or Spiritual significance – this is applicable if the collection is held in community esteem or can demonstrate community affection, structures, beliefs or cohesion. It is a contemporary value so there is no social or spiritual significance if its community bond is not evident or active in the present. In this case collections may still have historical significance.

NB - Social significance is usually the most contentious criteria, often the most difficult to establish, and requires the 'community' to be defined. With local history society collections it is difficult without extensive consultation to determine how much interest and engagement comes from participating in Society activities with like-minded people, and how much from the actual collection itself. However, social significance is a value far greater than interest in, and appreciation of, a collection. *Significance 2.0* recommends asking how a collection is of 'outstanding social value for a community', if it embodies 'beliefs, ideas, customs, traditions, associations, practices, places or stories that are particularly important for a group', and how social significance is 'established or demonstrated' (page 49).

**Comparative Criteria.** These modify the primary criteria to evaluate the degree of significance.

Fulfilling any or all comparative criteria, but not any primary criteria, does not make it significant.

- Provenance – this refers to a documented chain of ownership, recorded use and origin.
- Rarity & Representativeness - this relates to the quality of the collection in relation to similar collections and asks if it is a poor, typical or good collection. A collection may be rare if it is unusual or a particularly fine example, or extremely well documented, or has other distinguishing qualities.
- Condition, Intactness and Integrity - if a collection is unusually broad, or includes original, or complete set of primary documents, and is well cared for, this could enhance its significance.
- Interpretive Capacity - this refers to the collection's ability to demonstrate historical themes, processes, people or events. It will not have interpretive potential if it has no relationship with its context, or capacity to illuminate aspects of the relevant history. Interpretive potential differs from historical significance as it relates to the value the collection has to the curator or manager to create interpretive or informative displays.

Appreciation is due to Robert Baker and Judith Scurfield of Kew Historical Society; Lorinda Cramer for her advice on the costume collection; and Eve Almond, Jenn Burgess, and Margaret Birtley of the Heidelberg Historical Society.

# Investigation of Cultural Heritage Significance

## History of Kew

Kew is bordered to the north and west by the Yarra River and lies to the far south of Woiworong country, which includes the northern half of current day City of Boroondara. For thousands of years the Woiworong Aborigines managed their landscape through the use of low scale and regular burn offs. This encouraged abundant growth of plant foods and prevented grasses and forest undergrowth from dominating and making travel difficult. It also ensured animal food sources were attracted to locations convenient for catching them. For thousands of years their built environment, constructed from naturally available materials, had a relatively gentle effect on the natural landscape compared to the settlement and development of Kew and wider Melbourne by the Europeans since.<sup>1</sup>

In 1803 Charles Grimes, the Acting Surveyor-General of New South Wales, travelled up the Yarra and east past Dight's Falls. Grimes' colleague, James Fleming, wrote in his journal of a 'gently rising hill, clothed with trees for ten or fifteen miles. A little above the fall there is a small island, and the river divides in two. The timber in general is gum, oak and banksia...we were not more than half a mile from the river'.<sup>2</sup> In January 1836 the pastoralists John Gardiner, John Hepburn and Joseph Hawden travelled overland from New South Wales with their cattle '... and established the first cattle station in the Port Phillip District, on the eastern bank of the river' near Dight's Falls.<sup>3</sup> Squatters such as John Hodgson and James McEvoy were the first of the new arrivals to make the place their home but eventually most of the newly surveyed Parish of Boroondara, named after the Woiworong phrase for 'where the ground is thickly shaded'<sup>4</sup>, was sold off in government land sales and Kew, its name first used in 1851 for a sub-divided allotment north of Kew Junction, was transformed from Aboriginal country to European settlement.<sup>5</sup> Fueled by the gold-rush period, large mansions were built in Studley Park, however residential development remained slow due to a lack of public transport to the area.<sup>6</sup> On December 18, 1860 Kew was declared a municipality within the Parish of Boroondara, with the first meeting of the council on 15 January 1861.<sup>7</sup> Two years later, Kew was declared a borough.<sup>8</sup>

As the settlement grew, so did the demand for infrastructure. The Boroondara Road Board was established on October 4, 1856, comprising Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell, and construction of new bridges and roads began.<sup>9</sup> In 1858 the Johnston Street Bridge was completed. During the 1850s, a number of churches were constructed, as well as the Boroondara (Kew) Cemetery, which was opened in 1859. Another Kew landmark, the Kew Asylum, was completed in 1871, with the Kew Cottages added in 1887. Private schools were established in Kew from the 1870s; Ruyton Girls' School and Xavier College (1878), Methodist Ladies' College (1882), Genazzano College (1889),

<sup>1</sup> Bruce Pascoe, 'Chapter 5: Fire', *Dark Emu: Black Seeds. Agriculture or accident?*, (Broome: Magabala Books, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> W. D. Vaughan, *Kew's Civic Century* (Kew: W. D. Vaughan, 1960), 11; Dorothy Rogers, *A History of Kew* (Kilmore: Lowden Publishing Co., 1973), xi.

<sup>3</sup> Kew Historical Society, *City of Kew Centenary: 1860-1960* (Kew: Kew Historical Society, 1960), 1.

<sup>4</sup> 'Local Indigenous history', City of Boroondara, accessed 14 June 2018. <https://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/about-council/history-and-demographics/local-history/local-indigenous-history>

<sup>5</sup> Kew Historical Society, p.1; Rogers, pp xii & 1; Sylvia Morrissey, 'Kew', eMelbourne, accessed 11 June 2018.

<http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00796b.htm>; Built Heritage, Boroondara Thematic Environment History, pp.77-78.

<sup>6</sup> Tsari Anderson, 'Memory Victoria Project: Significance Assessment of Local History Collections in Victorian Public Libraries. City of Boroondara Library Service: Kew Library', May 2006, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Rogers, 82-83.

<sup>8</sup> Kew Historical Society, 1.

<sup>9</sup> W. D. Vaughan, *Kew's Civic Century* (Kew: W. D. Vaughan, 1960), 9.

Trinity Grammar (1902) and Carey Baptist Grammar (1923). The Wikipedia entry for Kew claims that 'By 1990 Kew had six government campuses and twenty-eight non-government campuses, the highest concentration of education institutions in the Western world'.

The horse tram that linked Kew with the Hawthorn railway station was replaced with a railway line in 1886, and five years later a second railway was opened connecting Oakleigh to Fairfield and passing through Kew. It only lasted a couple of years and was closed due to lack of use. Between 1914 and 1918 tram services were installed along High Street, Cotham, Glenferrie and Burke Roads.<sup>10</sup> These made the suburb more accessible and attracted enough new residents for Kew to be declared a town in 1910 and, following the First World War and subsequent subdivision and housing developments it was proclaimed a city in 1921.<sup>11</sup> In 1994 Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell were amalgamated to form the City of Boroondara.

Today Kew continues to be known for its mansions, the former asylum, cemetery and its private education institutions, as well as its large number of parks, including Yarra Bend and Studley Park. The suburb retained its residential feel due to council restrictions on the development of industry.<sup>12</sup> It has been said that 'Kew has, ever since its first settlement, borne the distinction of being Melbourne's prettiest and healthiest suburb.'<sup>13</sup> As a result it has tended to attract those best able to afford living in such a place, which is partly why there is an abundance of mansions and private schools in the area. However, it is also why there is a strong history of a successful, influential and well-connected residential population. Examples of Kew residents over the decades include the former Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix, Prime Ministers Billy Hughes and Robert Menzies, the virologist and Nobel Laureate MacFarlane Burnet, a former Premier of Victoria Rupert Hamer, the pathologist and founder of Melbourne's Peter MacCallum Cancer Institute, immunologist and Nobel Laureate Sir Gustav Nossal (also the Patron of the Kew Historical Society), businessman John Wren, writers Vance and Nettie Palmer and David Syme, founder of The Age newspaper amongst many others.

There is a strong sense of heritage and history in Kew with many residents staging influential and often successful campaigns to save and restore heritage buildings, the Kew Court House that houses the Historical Society's exhibitions being one successful example.

## History of the Organisation and of the Collection

The Kew Historical Society was established in 1958 and was at the vanguard of local historical societies in Victoria. The Society was formed to assist with preparations for the City's 100th anniversary in 1960.<sup>14</sup> Sixty years later it is flourishing and has a collection of considerable breadth and depth. In its first ten years or so the growing collection had no home and was housed often in the homes of office bearers. Later the collection was moved to the Kew Depot and then to Kew Municipal Offices. In 1987 the Kew Town Hall (1960-1987) was converted to accommodate the Kew Library, and the Kew Historical Society was given the southern stage area to serve as storage space for the collection and as a workspace for research, cataloguing and preservation. Monthly meetings

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<sup>10</sup> Anderson, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Anderson; Kew Historical Society.

<sup>12</sup> Anderson, 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> F. G. A. Barnard, 'Strolling Round', *The Jubilee History of Kew Victoria: Its Origin & Progress, 1803-1910* (Kew: E. F. G. Hodges. "Mercury" Office, 1910), accessed 13 June 2018. <http://www.biostats.com.au/Kew/s14-strolling.html>

<sup>14</sup> 'About', Kew Historical Society website, accessed 10 June 2018, <http://kewhistoricalsociety.org.au/khs/about/>

are held in a separate meeting room at the library. KHS have since had additional exhibition space at the Kew Court House.

Kew HS affiliated with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria in 1959 and has been working with and alongside its neighbouring historical societies since their formation. In 1994 the Cities of Kew, Camberwell and Hawthorn became the City of Boroondara, and the historical societies formed the Boroondara Historical Societies Association.

Kew HS was active from the beginning, researching and writing about Kew, and collecting records. Their first major task, and the reason for forming in the first place, was to write the official *City of Kew Centenary 1860-1960*.

Donations over time have been both small and large. Some have been spurred by events such as the 1994 council amalgamations, or by local residents donating personal collections for preservation, and occasional donations by local institutions when they move location or close.

Acquisitions have always been recorded in the Minutes of the Society but since the 1980s they were also recorded in the KHS newsletters and in various acquisition forms and loan documents. In 1981 two accession registers were used. In 2016 work began on an Excel Spreadsheet, 'The Catalogue', which aggregates as much information about previous acquisitions as can be gathered, and will continue to be the record for all current and future acquisitions.

Again in 2016 the Society transferred its digitised collection from its own website to that of Victorian Collections. KHS are very active on Victorian Collections and today has over 1,800 items online - <https://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/kew-historical-society>

## Focus and Scope of the Collection

The current Mission and Aims were formulated in 2012 and replace those described in an earlier Constitution ratified in October 1979. The aims in the 1979 iteration included associating with the National Trust of Victoria, the Historic Buildings Preservation Council (now Heritage Council of Victoria) and the Australian Heritage Commission to preserve buildings and objects; and to 'foster historical interest and knowledge, particularly but not exclusively, in this district', 'collect and preserve items of historical interest', and 'compile and keep a historical record of the district'.

The 2012 (current) iteration says the Society's Mission is to 'stimulate our community's interest in the economic, social, cultural and environmental history and heritage of Kew and its environs'. Its Aims no longer include working in association with state and federal heritage bodies but otherwise remain much same in terms of their scope (fostering interest and knowledge in the district and collecting items and records of the district) with some small differences that add clarification. They include:

'to provide a place where printed materials, photographs, publications and other objects that have significance to the history and heritage of Kew and its environs can be discovered, collected, studied, interpreted, preserved and displayed';

'to encourage the study, collection, preservation and exhibition of both historical and significant contemporary objects relating to Kew and its environs';

'to stimulate our community's interest in the economic social, cultural and environment history and heritage of Kew and its environs'.

The Collection Policy also makes reference to the *Victorian Framework of Historical Themes* and attempts to define temporal and spatial boundaries, 'which are very broad and extend beyond the local' despite the Mission and Aims consistently referring to 'Kew and its environs'.

## Contents of the Collection

This section is not a complete record of the KHS collection, which is very large and being catalogued and documented by Kew HS volunteers. It is a description of representative examples of the three priorities of this assessment – the costumes, maps and pictures. The whole collection also includes archives and manuscripts, audio-visual material, books and objects, amongst which are some important or complementary items that provide context to the costumes, maps and pictures. A number of these are also described.

### Maps and plans

This collection includes maps of broad areas such as Victoria, Melbourne, Kew with surrounding suburbs, and Kew itself; subdivision plans produced by real estate agents; reticulation and locality plans; and electoral, topographical and road maps. There are many copies in the overall collection, which numbers approximately 350 maps, but the collection also includes a number of rare or unique items that are particularly special from a historical and research aspect.

- Metropolitan Board of Work Plans: KHS holds a collection of approximately 100 Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plans of Kew and the surrounding suburbs. While it is not uncommon for local historical societies to hold such collections the KHS collection is very unusual. It was donated to the Society by the City of Kew Engineer's Department in 1989 (four drawers of originals and one drawer of duplicates), with 35 annotated in colour. This annotation is thought to be rare if not unique amongst MMBW plans. The Curator for KHS, who is a former Map Librarian at the State Library of Victoria, has never seen such annotated colour on MMBW maps and believes it was an idiosyncrasy of the incumbent City of Kew Engineer. Some examples of MMBW plans in the collection include:
  - MMBW Contour Plan of Melbourne & Suburbs: Melbourne Sewerage, dated 1894. Christian Kussmaul, chief draftsman and later designing engineer of the MMBW, has his signature in the bottom right corner. Original.
  - MMBW River Yarra Beautification Scheme, dated 1925. This and the Contour Plan above are not held by the State Library of Victoria. Original.
  - MMBW: Borough of Kew: Detail Plans no. 1294 & 1295, 1903. This and 34 others are annotated in colour to show survey data, dimensions and building materials: pink was used for brick or stone buildings, yellow for weatherboard and blue for outbuildings. Originals.
  - MMBW: no. 40: Collingwood & Kew, from 1899. This plan has contour lines, but another no. 40 is annotated differently and has no contour lines. Originals.
  - MMBW Plan No. 39: Kew & Heidelberg, 1898. Includes building and landscape details of Kew Lunatic asylum. Original.
  - Numerous other MMBW plans, a number of which were completed in the 1890s, but others are dated 1907, 1933 etc. MMBW: Borough of Kew: Detail Plan no. 1296 has been

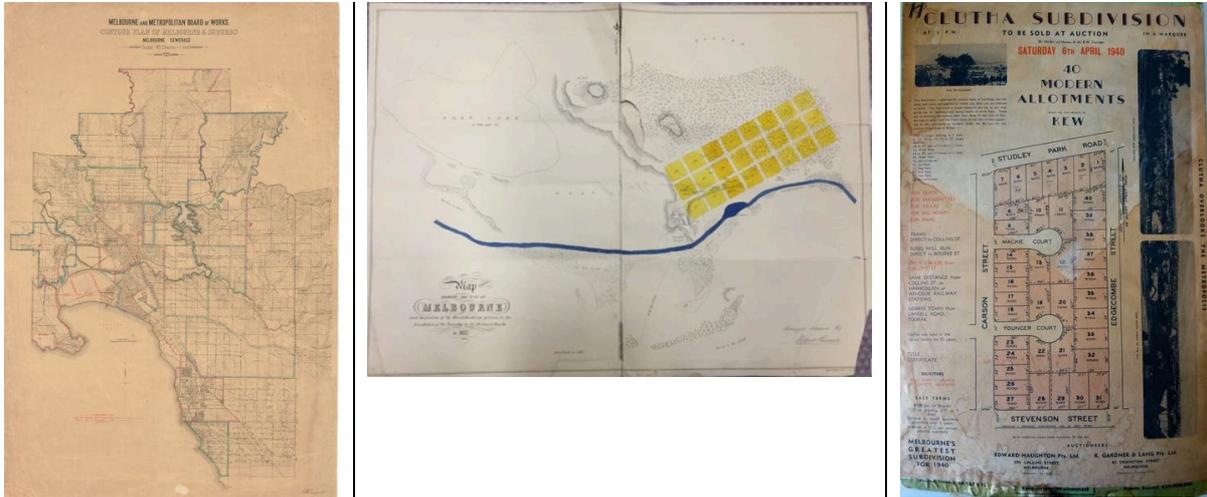
annotated several times, including in colour. Detail plan no. 1301 has been coloured and annotated with details including 'Reserved for road purposes'. The original plan was printed in 1903, with subsequent dates being 1904 and 1910; Detail Plan No. 1302 shows Victoria Street and industry along Yarra River ie. soapworks, wool washing shed and 'skittle alley'; A few MMBW plans of Kew Lunatic Asylum Grounds and the main building.

- *Map Shewing the Site of Melbourne* by deputy surveyor Robert Russell in 1836. Coloured hand-drawn map showing the contours and features of Melbourne and the positions of huts and buildings. This is the first map that was drawn of the fledgling town and the one held by KHS is a first edition. This map is in need of considerable repair and a valuer at the Rare Books Week 2018 recommended that restoration work be done.<sup>15</sup>
- Real estate subdivision plans of Studley Park and other estates. Undated, but 4-digit phone numbers on the plans indicate an early period. These show an important stage in Kew's evolution when the area was sub-divided and heavily promoted by real estate agents. There are some 130 subdivision plans dating mainly from the early 20th century, which was a time of growth for Kew leading to its evolution from a town (1910) to a city (1921). Some have annotations describing how much the land sold for etc. Many have been re-used and have images of the houses they were selling on the back. Originals.
- A hand drawn map titled 'Back to Kew' from c.1875. The map shows Pat Mornane's Paddock, the current site of Xavier College, and includes a list of churches, residences, major buildings, Dight's Falls and the Yarra River. Various people have annotated the map over the years. There are two photocopies in the collection that have further annotations. Original.
- 'Parishes of Boroondara and Keelbundora. Municipalities of Camberwell, Heidelberg and Kew', heavily annotated throughout and with a note at the bottom that says: 'This is the work sheet used to plot various items after studies by Jack Hackett in 1991-1994... the basic truth of these markings received the OK of Mr John Parker Surveyor General in 1993'.
- Printed plans of the City of Kew dated 1941, 1954, 1961, 1973 & 1979; a collection of revised plans from 1961 & the 1970s; a map of the Commonwealth Electoral Commission of Kooyong 1949; A plan of the City of Kew dated 1941-54, annotated with flood levels.
- Sands & McDougall map from the 1930s; lots of plans of the City of Kew recording changes in boundaries and electoral divisions; occasional maps covering areas beyond Kew – broader electoral provinces, larger Melway maps etc.
- Sketch plan of a triangle of land between the Cotham Road and High Street intersection and Charles Street, measured on tracing paper with lot numbers. The plan is with a page of notepaper and rough pen drawing of the same plan, with names of owners. Undated.
- Photocopies of a 'Proposed alterations and additions to Kew Library' plan, November 1996.
- Plan of Kew Safeway, Brougham and Walpole Streets, by Bruce Henderson Architects. Undated; plans of the town hall, council offices; photocopies of Elgar's Special Survey c.1840.

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<sup>15</sup> Email correspondence with Judith Scurfield, 30 July 2018

- A hand drawn 'Site of the first house in Kew Central. On the site of the former Kew Court House and Police Station' – triangle of land between Cotham and High St. Detailed description indicating location and name of all trees, flowerbeds, beehives, garden beds, house plan etc.<sup>16</sup>



MMBW Contour Plan of Melbourne & Suburbs: Melbourne Sewerage, 1894; 'Map showing the site of Melbourne and position of huts and buildings previous to the foundation of the township by sir Richard Bourke in 1837' by Robert Russell; 'Clutha Subdivision' plan, 1940.

### Pictures – photographs and artworks

This is the second sub-collection prioritised by the Community Heritage Grant and includes several thousand photographs and a number of artworks. The most significant items or sub-collections, and the reason for including 'Pictures' in the CHG application, are the mayoral portraits that were part of the former City of Kew's Municipal Collection.

**Kew Municipal Collection.** This has several hundred objects and framed and unframed photographs. The Mayoral portraits are considered the 'core' of the collection, which began as a series of framed photographs displayed in the first Kew Town Hall in Walpole Street. In 1973 the collection moved to the Kew Municipal Offices in Cotham Road. The collection included other artworks and objects such as a mayoral chain and robes. In 1994 when the City of Boroondara was formed the municipal collection was split up with the objects, costumes and artworks going to the Boroondara Civic Collection, some loose photographs to the Boroondara Library Services, and the framed photographs of the City of Kew Mayors to the KHS.

Heritage Consultant Ann Carew reviewed the mayoral portraits for the City of Boroondara in 2017 and believes them to be nationally significant for a number of reasons: it's extent (1861 -1967); the national profile of some of the Mayors, for example William Warren Kerr who was an influential businessman and government adviser at the turn of the twentieth century until his death in 1949<sup>17</sup>; and the significance of its photographers including Josiah Earl Barnes (1858-1921) who was known

<sup>16</sup> There is some doubt as to whether this is original or not, with a suggestion that the original might be at the State Library Victoria although we haven't found it on the catalogue. Whether or not the item held by KHS is original or a copy it is nonetheless an important document with many stories to tell about domesticity, agriculture and early settlement in Kew and so has considerable research and interpretive significance.

<sup>17</sup> Geoffrey Serle, 'Kerr, William Warren (1864-1949)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, accessed 19 June 2018, (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kerr-william-warren-559>)



## Other photographs and artworks:

- Two paintings from c.1882 of John Halfey and his wife Annie housed in their original gilded frames. The portrait of John Halfey fills a gap in the mayoral portrait collection as he was the second Chairman of Kew; the two Chairmen being the predecessors to the Mayors of Kew, and being without a Mayoral portrait of their own. The two paintings were donated in early 2017 by a descendent of the Halfeys. The Halfey portraits are dated c1880 and may have been painted by artists working for the decorator firm Cullis Hill & Co while they were decorating the Halfey home, Ordsall. Conservation work has been recommended for both portraits after an assessment by the Grimwade Centre for Material Conservation.
- Three plaster mural fragments from 'Southesk' (formerly Ordsall), built for John Halfey c1883. Kew Council bought the house in 1947 as a site for the Town Hall, but many community groups used it instead until 1970 when it was finally demolished. The Historical Society holds the only three fragments of the frescoes in the front rooms that remain.
- A large set of photographs that accompany the mural fragments and show what Southesk (Ordsall) originally looked like.
- Panoramic photograph of the gardens of Rockingham in 1870 (dated on the back), looking over the Yarra and into Richmond. Rockingham was one of the early mansions built in Kew.
- The Joy Stewart Collection, donated by a founding member and early honorary secretary of KHS. Stewart was an artist who, in 1988, was commissioned to illustrate representations of Kew's history for Australia's bicentenary. These illustrations were converted into tapestries made by community members. Stewart also painted a large number of Kew streetscapes and buildings such as Marshall Avenue; terrace houses; Sunning Hill; Merritt House, Trinity Grammar; and Derham house. Her sketches and watercolours and the tapestries are held by KHS. This collection shows the interpretive process of depicting history artistically, and the artistic process of conceptualising the tapestries, tracing and drawing, then colouring, choosing threads, and sewing. Five tapestries are on display in the Kew Library, another is stored with the earlier drawings and the seventh was started but never completed.



A Joy Stewart watercolour sketches; Stewart's coloured drawing used as a template for the bicentenary tapestry project

- A 1921 panoramic photograph of students and teachers at Woodbury College, now Preshil.
- A photograph of an early Kew bridge, washed away by floods in the 1890s. It was called 'The Penny Bridge' as it cost a penny to come across and crossed near Church Street, Richmond.

- A photograph of the opening of the Victoria Street Bridge on March 31, 1884. The photograph is quite faded.
- An artwork, possibly an etching, by John Shirlow, of a view of the Princes Street Bridge and Swanston Street in 1931. It is unclear whether there are copies of this work, but typically Shirlow was known for making copies.
- Two photographs of 'The Old Gum Tree' in Victoria Park by Colin Campbell in 1961. The giant red gum was photographed in 1910 and included in the Jubilee History of Kew captioned 'The Oldest Inhabitant'. Campbell re-photographed it fifty-one years later and it has since been recommended for preservation in a 2007 City of Boroondara Master Plan. The 1910 and 1961 images show several changes in the park and surroundings over this time.
- Artwork by an anonymous artist from c.1896, which depicts the view over East Kew towards Heidelberg, with Kinglake in the distance. This artwork is significant as it shows land use, development and settlement in the local area. The painting also confirms that, right up to High Street, East Kew was still farmland until the 1890s. A label on the rear of the frame says 'House on corner of Adeney Ave & Parkhill. Regd. 254', but is otherwise unsigned and undated. A second painting, by W. Nichols Anderson, virtually the same but painted from a slightly different angle, was completed in 1906.
- A nineteenth century chalk landscape of the entrance to the Boroondara Cemetery by the sister of the artist George Bell, completed before the red brick walls were built in the 1890s.
- A collection of photographs from the 1870s, taken by the landscape photographer Nicholas Caire. Kew HS holds 55 of the 60 original photographs in the series 'Views of Victoria (General Series)'. The mounts of a number of the photographs are not in very good condition, however the State Library of Victoria and the National Library of Australia also have copies. The images include local Kew icons such as Studley Park and the Yarra River.
- A book titled 'Kew Living 1988' produced for Australia's bicentenary includes photographs of various aspects of Kew in 1988 taken by eight local Melbourne photographers. Kew HS has the original photographs, including some that are mounted. The subjects include residents, newly arrived migrants, shops, baby health centres, schools, homes and other subjects.



The three mural fragments from 'Southesk' (originally called Ordsall) which was built for John Halfey; photograph of the opening of the Victoria Street Bridge on March 31, 1884

## Costumes (clothing and hats) & Textiles

In recent years costume advice has been sought from several experts including independent historians, private collectors and staff at the National Gallery Victoria. Despite this there is little sense of what ought to be included in the Kew Collection, or what to dispose of. Not surprisingly, given the collection dates back nearly sixty years, many records do not have consistent or clear provenance, however a large number of donations represent the work of significant Australian designers or were worn by significant people.

The costume collection is extensive and has been a significant inclusion in the KHS collection since 1961. It has approximately 500 pieces and covers a time period from the 1850s to the 1980s, although some decades are a lot better represented than others reflecting the larger donations. A rough analysis of the contents indicates the following: 1850s (1 costume), 1860s (5), 1870s (7), 1880s (13), 1890s (13), 1900s (10), 1910s (4), 1920s (15), 1930s (26), 1940s (7), 1950s (16), 1960s (32), 1970s (33), 1980s (9).<sup>18</sup>

Most of the items are women's clothing and includes day- and evening-wear, accessories, underwear, and a number of uniforms including tramways uniforms from the 1980s donated by Yarra Trams and Australian Infantry Force uniforms from the Second World War. The cataloguing spreadsheet '2018-Costumes List' indicates very little knowledge of who the maker or designer was until the 1950s, when labels began to be attached to the clothing.

The first three points below describe significant costume donations, although they also contain manuscripts, photographs, objects and ephemera. Subsequent points describe items across the costume collection that are also considered important because of their designer, wearer or quality.

- The McIntyre Collection is a personal collection donated by Peter and Dione McIntyre, longstanding members of the KHS, architects and civic leaders. They led the Save the Kew Court House campaign, and Dione McIntyre managed and exhibited the KHS costume collection for many years.
- The Weir Collection was donated by the granddaughter of Edith Mary Weir and George Weir, an industrialist and manager of the North Broken Hill Mine and Kew residents from 1916. The collection includes costumes, documents, photographs and objects from the 1880s to the 1940s. The costumes have very detailed provenance and are of high quality.
- The Coombs Collection. The Coombs family were landowners and pioneers in Victoria with a property in Studley Park, Kew. In 1961 a descendent donated a collection of 19th century family costumes, which today form the core of the 19th century costume collection.
- A two-piece Martin Grant evening outfit (1980s) comprising a black velvet wrap jacket and dark green silk culottes, covered in sheer black organza fabric.
- A green with pink/red tulip pattern full-length dress designed by Allen Gaye in the 1970s.
- An Oggi Fashion House cream wedding dress purchased by Janet Brock in December 1971. The dress falls just below the knee and has long, sheer sleeves. It is lined with silk, with a double outer layer of organza, and has ruffle organza frills at the neck, on the sleeves and on the flared hem. The dress also has a wide fabric belt with a double bow, worn at the front.

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<sup>18</sup> Baker, R. & McWha, S. 'Sub-collection Statement. Fashion & Design', 2018

- An ice green pleated dress designed by Prue Acton in the 1960s.
- An evening coat made of yellow silk designed by Jinoel of Melbourne in the 1960s. The coat has a matching yellow belt and cream lining.
- A brightly coloured cotton 'flower power' dress with bright pink buttons to the waist. The dress was designed by Kenneth Pirrie in the late 1960s.
- A sheer black Norma Tullo full length and long sleeved dress with white and cream polka dots designed in the 1960s.



An ice green pleated Prue Acton dress (1960s); a Kenneth Pirrie dress (late 1960s); an Oggi Fashion House cream wedding dress purchased by Janet Brock in December 1971

Some items that are part of the Coombs collection:

- A two-piece white silk wedding dress dated c.1869 with a short, tailored bodice and bell-shaped skirt, wide pagoda sleeves, with false undersleeves of muslin. There are also panels of lace from the waist that are the only decoration on the skirt.
- A bright blue silk and velvet two-piece dress – a jacket and floor length bustle skirt – c.1868-72. The jacket has velvet edging and buttons down to the waist.
- A gold silk taffeta evening dress or wedding gown with silk braid and tassels. The dress was made in c. 1879 and has a fishtail train, in addition to many other decorative features.
- A blue silk jacket and skirt from c. 1868-72. The jacket has large ornamental buttons down to the waist covered with the same silk fabric as the dress and a long, narrow train.
- A blue silk and lace day dress from c.1862-63. It is likely that the lace was added later, as was the V-neck detail. The skirt is a bell shape with a very short bustle/train.
- A c.1878 light blue afternoon dress with white buttons from neck to floor and a long train. The dress has been let out in the mid-section at some stage.

Some items that are part of the Weir collection:

- A cream, two-piece wedding dress made up of a long-sleeved and pleated bodice and a full skirt, accompanied by a pair of silk and leather shoes. The dress and shoes are from 1891 and were worn by Edith Betteridge at her marriage to George Weir in Broken Hill.
- An 1880s silk evening dress which is light blue in colour and has accents of cream lace. The dress has loose, full sleeves and is made up of two pieces. The bodice is embroidered with a pattern in a slightly darker thread. Kew Historical Society also holds the stockings that accompany this dress.
- An afternoon dress made from cream cotton and lace, dated in the 1900s.
- A layered blue georgette peignoir from the 1900s.
- Two black silk georgette evening dresses (1920s). One with diamante detailing on a pocket.
- Two full-length cream pinafores from the 1900s. Both have a spotted decorative pattern, however one has a small bodice and a ruffle near the base of the skirt.
- A black floor-length evening gown with a short train at the back. The dress has a matching belt studded with diamantes. There are two black and silver capes that go with the dress.
- A bright print sequined Flapper dress from the 1920s, made from silk and georgette. The short-sleeved evening dress is also part of the Weir collection.



A two-piece white silk wedding dress dated c.1869, which has wide pagoda sleeves; a blue silk jacket and skirt from c. 1868-72; a bright print sequined Flapper dress from the 1920s

### Hat Collection

The hats number around seventy and include examples such as a gentleman's smoker's hat from the 1860s to a faux leopard skin brimmed hat by designer Anne Harrison in the 1960s. Kew milliners Harrison and R & M Dower are represented in the KHS collection with seven hats.

- Cream and green silk floral Anne Harrison hat on net (1960s).
- Purple and pink felt hat owned by a local Mayoress and designed by Anne Austin of the Block Arcade.
- A c.1960s French hat covered in iridescent feathers donated by Kew resident Marion Blatchley.
- Black and white striped silk and chiffon hat either designed or sold by Beverly of Melbourne. The hat has a band of black chiffon that forms a loose bow at the back.
- A gentleman's smokers (loungers) cap from the 1870s Victorian gold fields. The rimless hat is made from dark green cotton fabric, embroidered with a narrow ribbon of paler green silk.
- 1920s navy blue cloche hat made of felt, with ruched bands of navy and green velvet around the edge. The hat belongs to the McIntyre collection.
- A gentleman's smokers (loungers) hat made of dark green velvet, embroidered with yellow and green silk thread and topped with a lime green tassel. The hat was worn by W. H. Richardson, the father of Kew historian Dorothy Rogers.
- A teal green felt hat made of three layers of felt and surmounted by a felt bow. Green and silver sequins in a triangle pattern surround the second layer.



The c.1960s circular French hat covered in iridescent feathers; a gentleman's smokers (loungers) cap from the 1870s Victorian gold fields; a 1920s navy blue felt cloche hat, with ruched bands of navy and green velvet around the edge

### Textiles

There are many textiles in this collection including lace, shawls, quilts and embroidery.

- An intricate and exquisite silk patchwork quilt with a hexagon-style pattern dated from c.1850-1875 and thought to have been brought from England by the Denbigh family in the early 1850s or 1860s. The individual hexagon medallions are made from different patterned

or plain fabrics, perhaps from a number of different garments. The quilt is unlined and has a shattered green silk border added at a later date.<sup>19</sup>

- Lace and crochet pieces hand made by the Finger family, who were German immigrants living in Hawthorn during the nineteenth century. Some of the items include hats, camisoles, nightdresses, collars etc. The collection was donated by historian Ruth Dwyer.
- A second collection of lace with: a long sleeve cape; another long sleeve cream cape with button detailing and various bits of lace appliqued onto it; two lace collars, one slightly pink in colour; a pair of loose cuffs made of lace; a lace belt with two hanging pieces; some Maltese lace etc.
- A book of sewing samples produced by student Emily Davies during the Plain Sewing Movement of the early twentieth century. Examples of sewing include knitting, needlework and buttons. The Plain Sewing Movement, or needlework, was an important component of girls' education and was taught at the Baldur Girls Grammar School in Kew. The movement was focused on the quality and value of 'utilitarian sewing', 'it consisted of a set of sewing techniques to construct and repair clothing.'<sup>20</sup>



The silk patchwork quilt with a hexagon style pattern, produced between 1850 and 1875

### Archives and manuscripts

These include a series of vertical files currently being indexed. The indexing project is about half way through and some significant items have been found. There are many sub-collections donated by individuals, some large enough to need archival boxes rather than vertical files. The archives and manuscripts include genealogical, political, social, environmental and conservation information. The most extensive files are local municipal collections (cities of Kew and Boroondara) and information on the restoration of the Kew Court House, the Kew Asylum and Villa Alba. Some of the most interesting or important donations are from personal and institutional collections:

- Irena Higgins, donated by her daughter Barbara Higgins. Higgins was appointed as the first social worker to the Kew Asylum (Willsmere) and to Kew Cottages. These documents relate to her involvement and leadership roles in both these institutions, and in establishing emergency housing in Kew.

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<sup>19</sup> Suzanne McWha, 'Not a ragbag wagga: the Kew patchwork quilt', Kew Historical Society Newsletter, September 2016, pp.5-6

<sup>20</sup> Suzanne McWha, 'Baldur and the art of female 'muscle culture'', Kew Historical Society Newsletter, March 2016, pp.9-10

- Jill O'Brien, an Australian Democrat and Mayor of Kew in 1983 and '84, and heavily involved in medical, social and environmental issues in and beyond Kew all her working life. She regularly donated items to KHS and on her death in 2016 material that related to Kew, such as historic conservation issues, local government, the Villa Alba Museum and artworks acquired by the City of Kew, were retained by Kew HS. The rest of her collection went to the State Library Victoria.
- Dorothy Rogers was a founding KHS member, historian and author of *A History of Kew* (1973). She donated family history items dating back to her family's connection with Kew since the 1860s. A donation by her sons after her death largely relates to the 1970s and to both herself and her family. A final donation was made in 2016 of a large collection of photographs from her own professional library.
- Vaughan-Smith collection of family autograph books, scrapbooks and sketchbooks compiled by three generations of Rosemary (Gipps) Vaughan-Smith's family and donated by Raymond and Rosemary Vaughan-Smith who were long time residents of Kew and members of KHS.
- East Kew Women's Club Collection: Six minute books for 1945-1946, and 1953 to 1973; undated testimonials by club members; letter and photograph of bouquet sent to H. M. Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother; letter of thanks from lady in waiting; EKWC History, 1945-1965; annual syllabus 1953, 1969 to 1972; card bearing club motto; four attendance books from 1959 to 1973; a visitors book dated 1957-1973; an address book dated 1951.
- Kew Lionesses Collection: Seven copies of 'Where violets once grew: a short history of the Lioness Club of Kew' by Helen Joyce; two photograph albums containing photographs and various ephemera; various accounts books dated from 1980 to 1992; a number of flags; a scrapbook containing photographs and profiles of members.
- Kew Ladies Benevolent Society: A minute book covering the periods 1911-12 and 1951-61.
- Fairyland: A house in Malmsbury Street, Kew that had been fantastically and elaborately decorated by its owners using old pieces of china, glass, bottles and other materials. These were turned into statues and figures of all sorts, creating a kind of grotto that became a well-known tourist attraction for children between 1940 and 1965, when the owner died and the house was sold. The KHS collection includes six guest books (A4 and A5 size notebooks covered in butchers paper) with notes and pictures by visiting children.
- National Bank of Australasia (Kew): Signature books (1884 to 1922).
- Barnard Pharmacy: Dispensary books (early 1860s and early 1890s)

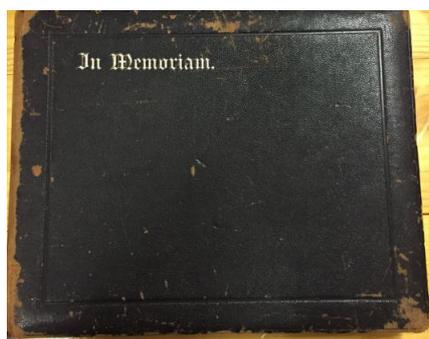
### Audio-visual

This includes material from the 1950s and 1960s on six reel-to-reel magnetic tapes and fifteen audio-cassettes, most of which are not digitised or transcribed. There is one digitised recording of a speech by The Hon Robert Menzies at the City of Kew Centenary in 1960, another of a talk by former Mayor of Kew and founding KHS member W.H.S. Dickinson on his early life in Kew and his WW1 and WW2 experiences. The City of Kew Council centenary meeting is recorded but not digitised.

## Books

A library of nearly 500 books includes architecture, art, biographies, directories and almanacs, family histories, and histories of government institutions, local areas, organisations, gardens, etc. About one-third of the library consists of the professional library originally belonging to Kew historian Dorothy Rogers and donated by her and her family. Two items may be of national importance.

- Two of five known copies of *In Memoriam: Annie Constance Springthorpe* (1897) by Dr John William Springthorpe and illustrated by the artist and five-time winner of the Archibald Prize for Portraiture James Longstaff. Following the death of his wife Annie this commemorative book was produced for Springthorpe's personal collection, his children and immediate family members. The books contain poems, photographs and drawings. Springthorpe also commissioned a memorial in the Boroondara General Cemetery for her. This is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (H0522) for its historic and architectural significance to the state. As with this memorial, the book is likely to be 'historically important in demonstrating nineteenth century social and cultural attitudes to death'<sup>21</sup> as well as being a unique document to celebrate the life and mourn the death of a loved one. At Melbourne's Rare Book Week 2018 these volumes were noticed to have red rust leather disease. The KHS has since adopted storage strategies to prevent this from getting worse.<sup>22</sup>
- A photographic album titled *Kew: Where we live* (1891) by Kew photographer J.F.C. Farquhar and commissioned by Kew Mayor Henry Kellett. Farquhar, although described as an 'amateur photographer', teamed up with 'Thomas Baker, one of the first to manufacture dry plates locally...to open their rooms in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne'.<sup>23</sup> The spine is not intact and the front cover has almost completely come off. The Grimwade Centre recommended the book be conserved. The first page explains 'The accompanying illustrations are Photographic Views of Kew and its surroundings...' and inside are 12 photographs of buildings, landmarks and landscapes, some of which no longer exist. Photographs could be purchased individually at the time, so some images exist in the State Library Victoria collection but this is the only known book in existence and is thought to be a unique photographic record of the area in the late nineteenth century.

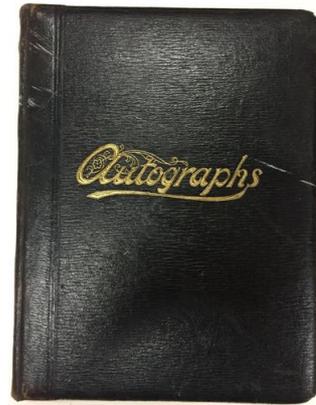


'In Memoriam: Annie Constance Springthorpe', compiled by John William Springthorpe and illustrated by J. Longstaff in 1897; original framed photograph of the unveiling of the Kew War Memorial, 30 August 1925

<sup>21</sup> 'Springthorpe memorial, Boroondara General Cemetery', Statement of Significance, Victorian Heritage Database Report, last updated June 18, 1999

<sup>22</sup> Email correspondence with Robert Baker, 30 July 2018

<sup>23</sup> 'Timeline: Photography Exhibition, Collecting and Curating in Australia', Curating Photography, accessed 19 June 2018, [https://photocurating.net/?page\\_id=194](https://photocurating.net/?page_id=194)



Sketchbook of Louisa Golburn Thomas, with the date 1862 inscribed on the front page; black leather bound autograph book from 1905-1922, with most of the entries from Brisbane, Queensland

## Objects

- An illustrated certificate in an unusual timber frame presented to the first Chairman of the Melbourne Tramways Trust in 1886. Council crests adorn the sides of the certificate and there is a picture of a cable car at the bottom and the cable works at the top.
- A number of certificates presented to returned soldiers of Kew from the First World War. Each suburb and town had their own design for these certificates; Kew's have emblems and symbols of Australia and Great Britain and includes the coat of arms of the allies in war. Also included on the certificate are two black and white photographs of Kew landmarks; the rotunda in the Alexandra Gardens and an image of boating on the Yarra River.
- Certificates for members of the Kew Volunteer Fire Brigade. One certificate, from 1891, includes the only known picture of the original Kew Fire Brigade.
- Performing arts: scrapbooks and theatre and musical programs from the 1940s-1960s.
- A Kew Flyer Women's Roadster bike from c.1920, made by Harry F. Cooper, whose shop was located on Cotham Road.
- The Grigg Collection was donated by a Kew Bank Manager with a fascination for patriotic fund-raising buttons during and after the First World War. These are catalogued on Victorian Collections and elicit many enquiries.
- An original framed photograph of the unveiling of the Kew War Memorial on August 30, 1925, which is on permanent exhibition at the Kew Court House. There were over five thousand people in attendance at the ceremony, presided over by the Governor and the Mayor. The memorial itself is also on the Victorian Heritage Register (H2035) for its historic, architectural and social significance to Victoria.

## Role in the Community

Despite the limited availability of space and no paid professional staff both Kew HS members and the wider public have extremely good access to the Society's activities and to its collection. This access is through several avenues that have been gradually added to over the years as active Committee members voluntarily commit skills and knowledge to various activities such as research and exhibitions.

Kew HS members played a key role in the preservation and restoration of the Kew Police Station and Court House and its listing on the Victorian Heritage Register (HO944) in August 1982. KHS has since had exhibition space and limited research space in two upstairs rooms of the former police station part of the complex, now known as the Kew History Centre. These rooms are staffed by KHS volunteers every Friday and Saturday (11 am – 1 pm).

The KHS newsletter is published quarterly and invariably includes at least one article in relation to the collection or an object within the collection. This makes it an invaluable resource in terms of promoting the collection and educating readers about its value and the opportunities it offers for research and interpretation. The newsletter is made widely available in the Kew Library and elsewhere so non-members may access it easily. All issues since # 98 February 2012 are also digitised and placed online on the KHS website. The digitised newsletter collection has been valuable in compiling this report.

The current KHS website was established in about 2013 and provides information about the history of Kew as well as about the Society and its activities, how to donate to the collection, and research activities. The Society has a Research Group who research and write about topics that interest them in relation to Kew. Some of these are published as pieces in the Newsletter and placed on the website for everyone's benefit, although to be a contributor you must be a member of KHS. The website 'Research' page also provides a link to the Group's 'Research Files' so anyone interested can request these. Its ever growing digitised collection is also constantly available on the Museum Victoria collection's website Victorian Collections, which has proven to attract a large number of virtual visitors who often enquire with KHS direct for more information. The KHS collection is recognized as the most comprehensive collection in the local region and is often called upon by genealogical and built heritage researchers

The Kew HS (established 1958) is the oldest and the most active of the seven Boroondara historical societies (Balwyn [2008], Camberwell [1963], Canterbury [1987], Friends of Boroondara Cemetery, Hawthorn [1974], and Surrey Hills [1978]). There are currently discussions with the City of Boroondara to enhance collaboration between three of these societies by sharing a single collections space, which will provide greater opportunities for the community to access, enjoy and research the KHS collection and will enable Kew to play a more significant and collaborative role within the association of historical societies.

Members involved in voluntary tasks such as cataloguing and preservation visit at least twice a week. There are items on display in the Library proper for Library users to enjoy every day, and those on display at the Kew Court House are on display twice a week.

## Comparative Analysis

This section of the Significance Assessment compares the Kew HS Collection with similar collections in Australia. It has been conducted by visits, email correspondence, website descriptions, and the use of online databases including library or museum catalogues where available.

The Kew HS maps, pictures and costumes compare very favourably at a local and state level for all three of these sub-collections, and in some cases at a national level. This is particularly so when considering the depth of the costume collection (a strong representation of nineteenth century items as well as across the twentieth century), the rarity of some items in the map collection, and the associations of so many portraits, paintings and photographs in the picture collection.

### Brighton Historical Society

The Brighton Historical Society (BHS) collection contains photography and art, books and maps, artifacts of local significance and a large costume collection. The BHS also houses various specialty files, such as street and house files, people files, and more general files.

BHS has approximately 1000 costumes and accessories in their collection from the early nineteenth century to the present day, which they collect to document the history of Brighton, and of Melbourne more generally. The collection is currently being photographed and catalogued by volunteers on to the Victorian Collections website. In 2010 a Significance Assessment determined it was of state significance as 'it is the most comprehensive collection of costume in a historical society or small museum in the state'.<sup>24</sup> The Kew collection could also be described as 'comprehensive' for a historical society or small museum, as could several other collections (ie Benalla's and the Melbourne Costume Collection – see below, and Bendigo Historical Society which apparently has approximately 2000 items of historic clothing). The Kew collection, however, is half the size at about 500 items and with costumes from the mid nineteenth century to the 1980s it does not offer the time extent of the Brighton collection.

BHS also holds a large collection of maps and plans, including aerial maps, Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plans and subdivision plans. The maps and plans date from the 1880s until 1971, with the earliest map of Brighton dating back to 1876. Unlike the Kew Historical Societies MMBW plans, none of those at BHS are colour coded.

There are approximately 1200 photographs and 65 paintings in the BHS collection and they primarily relate to people, events, and the local area of Brighton. The most significant items are those that document the bay, identities and buildings of Brighton.<sup>25</sup>

### Heidelberg Historical Society

Since 1979 this Society's home and museum has been the historic Old Heidelberg Court House adjacent to the Heidelberg Police Station in Jika Street. It has a research centre, workspaces, meeting rooms, museum exhibition/display spaces and storage facilities. The HHS collection is large and comprises objects (including textiles and framed works), maps and plans, photographs and other pictures, community archives, information files and a library.

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<sup>24</sup> 'Costumes', Brighton Historical Society, accessed 8 June 2018.  
<http://www.brightonhistorical.org.au/index.php/resources/costumes>

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*; email correspondence with Brighton Historical Society, 21 May 2018

The textiles collection of about 500 items makes up about one quarter of the total object collection. It includes the original mayoral robes worn by the first Mayor of the City of Heidelberg, Cr. T H Westfield, 1934–5, and robes worn by later mayors and town clerks.

The civic collection contains three important documents relating to the establishment of Heidelberg as a City. The first is the publication of the Act of Parliament entitled 'Shire of Heidelberg declared a City', 10 April 1934. The second is the first impression of the City Seal, 15 May 1934; and the third is the original formal letter from the Governor of Victoria, Lord Huntingfield, proclaiming the Shire of Heidelberg as a City, 14 November 1934. These three framed documents are complimented by formal photographs of the inaugural Councilors and Officers of the City of Heidelberg, 1934; the Mayor in his new formal robes; and the Proclamation Ceremony by the Governor of Victoria, 14th November 1934.

The Civic Collection includes the original Municipal Association of Victoria Inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia certificate signed by the Shire of Heidelberg President and Councilors. There is also a collection of formal photographic portraits of some shire presidents and several mayors but they do not represent the full sequence of office bearers, and fall far short of the Kew HS mayoral portrait collection. Overall there are some obvious gaps in the civic collection possibly due to the amalgamations in 1994 and other changes and priorities at a council level.

The highlight of the HHS collection in terms of its comparison with Kew is in its 5,000 Maps and Plans Collection, which, together with associated information files and local estate agents' sales brochures, offer tremendous research opportunities to members and non-members. Cataloguing and digitising is about two-thirds of the way through and the collection is continually expanding. HHS covers an area that stretches in a wide band from Hurstbridge in the north to Fairfield in the south, considerably larger than Kew HS's geographical spread, and in terms of place and building histories this is well served by the Heidelberg Historical Society.

#### Australian Racing Museum Costume collection

The 2011 Significance Assessment conducted for the Australian Racing Museum (ARM) Collection noted that amongst the 427 'Fashions on the field items' there were hats and outfits worn by Beatrice Sneddon from the 1960s, the Peter Jago collection which included 42 hats made by Jago and others and the Lillian Frank collection, which included 62 hats made by such designers as Wendy Mead and Ashely Franklin. Also within the 'Fashions on the field' collection are 'Winners' outfits', ranging in date from the 1960s to the 2000s.

In addition, the millinery collection included 361 items, and comprised hats worn by Lily Hilldebrand, Angela Cousens and Des Gleeson. There were also other assorted pieces of clothing worn by notable women.<sup>26</sup>

The ARM collection of hats and costumes is superb, enabled by the longstanding tradition of dressing up for the races, so is enhanced by its associations with significant designers and owners. This collection is well known and probably as extensive in terms of quality, quantity and date range as the KHS collection, so was worth considering as a comparison even though it is limited to costumes worn only in relation to racing events.

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<sup>26</sup> Sonia Jennings & Emma Russell, Significance Assessment for the Australian Racing Museum Collection, May 2011.

### Benalla Costume Museum

Much like Kew Historical Society's collection, the vast majority of the costumes held by Benalla are items of women's clothing. However, the Benalla Costume Museum's collection has pieces from a considerably earlier period with strong provenance connecting them to Benalla families, namely two dresses made in 1750 and 1770, with the remainder of the pieces dated from c.1840s to c.2000. As of August 2015, there were approximately 4000 costumes and accessories in the collection, making it considerably larger than both Kew and Brighton. The Benalla Museum, also with a focus on Ned Kelly, is a local history and volunteer run museum but has quite a large exhibition space that it puts to good use. Their collection includes many mannequins, sourced for free from contacts in the retail and fashion industry, and these provide a lively display and ready curation of exhibitions.<sup>27</sup>

### The Melbourne Costume Collection (also known as Loel Thomson's The Costume Collection)

The Melbourne Costume Collection is a privately owned collection of over 10,000 Australian costumes, jewelry and accessories. The costumes date back to Australia's beginnings in 1788 and include some 10,000 items.<sup>28</sup> The owner's focus is on social history and the everyday clothes that people wore. Exhibitions are changed regularly and often include photographs from magazines or private photographs that show people wearing the clothes or items similar to those on display. As with the Benalla displays, mannequins are expressive and varied in their poses and full use is made of backdrops and props to bring a sense of movement and life to the displays. This museum is not advertised and does not have a website but is well known through word of mouth, reviews and blog postings or published articles by visitors.<sup>29</sup>

### Museum Victoria Costume collection

The clothing and textile collection at Museum Victoria 'consists of clothing and textiles produced and used in historical and contemporary contexts in Victoria'. The collection demonstrates 'social history, design, manufacturing and craftsmanship'.<sup>30</sup> Significant sub-collections include items from key Victorian manufacturers, some of which no longer exist, such as Simpson's Glove Factory.

### National Gallery of Victoria Costume collection

The Fashion and Textiles collection at the National Gallery of Victoria has close to 8,500 items and 'actively acquires researches and exhibits historical and contemporary fashion and textiles.' The earliest Australian items in their collection are items by 19<sup>th</sup> century dressmakers and tailors and their collection extends to include contemporary textile artists, milliners and shoemakers. Although the collection includes items from Australia wide, it does have a distinctly Melbourne-focus.<sup>31</sup>

### Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles

Operating in Maitland, New South Wales, the Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles was established in 2005 and holds items of national or worldwide importance. According to Museums & Galleries of NSW website, the Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles 'collects, conserves,

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<sup>27</sup> Emma Russell, Significance Assessment: Benalla Costume and Kelly Museum, August 2015.

<sup>28</sup> 'Costume Collection - Melbourne', Only Melbourne, accessed 8 June 2018. <https://www.onlymelbourne.com.au/melbourne-costume-collection#.Wxoqw1OF08o>; Carolyn Webb, 'A real life saver', *Age*, accessed 8 June 2018. <https://www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/06/22/1087844921031.html>

<sup>29</sup> Emma Russell, Significance Assessment: Benalla Costume and Kelly Museum, August 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Deborah Tout-Smith, 'Clothing & Textiles Collection', Museums Victoria Collections, accessed 8 June 2018. <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/2850>

<sup>31</sup> 'Fashion & Textiles', National Gallery of Victoria, accessed 14 June 2018. <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/curatorial/fashion-textiles/>

documents and displays items of clothing, textiles and related items both domestic and commercial, from Australia's earliest times to the present day.' Within the collection are 'unusual and exquisite items of clothing and handwork, everyday clothing reflecting fashion and world events, right through to "mend and make do items"'. The museum holds public programs and attractions including changing displays, fashion parades and talks.<sup>32</sup>

### The City of Melbourne Civic Collection

The Council and Town Hall sub-collection, part of the 8000-piece City of Melbourne Art and Heritage Collection, includes photographs, assorted objects and mayoral portraits dating back to the 1850s.<sup>33</sup> It is the mayoral portraits that are of interest in this comparison and the CoM collection has 23 mayoral portrait oil paintings, in addition to many other photographic portraits.<sup>34</sup> However the City's mayoral portrait collection is incomplete. Some portraits were mislaid, others lost in a fire in 1925, and a few were simply not done altogether. Included in the collection is a painting of Samuel Amess by Tom Roberts. Amess was lord mayor from 1869-70 and was also responsible for building the Kew Lunatic Asylum.<sup>35</sup>

### State Library of Victoria Map Collection

A search of the State Library of Victoria catalogue for the words 'MMBW', with the resource type 'maps' selected, produces 3,519 results, with 136 being specifically MMBW maps of Kew.

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<sup>32</sup> 'Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles', Museums & Galleries of NSW, accessed 14 June 2018.

<https://mgnsw.org.au/organisations/australian-museum-clothing-and-textiles/>

<sup>33</sup> 'City Collection', City of Melbourne, accessed 8 June 2018. <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/arts-and-culture/Pages/city-collection.aspx>

<sup>34</sup> Email correspondence with City of Melbourne, City Collection, (12 June 2018).

<sup>35</sup> Phip Murray, *Good Looking: Portraits from the City of Melbourne Collection* (Melbourne: City of Melbourne, February 2013), Exhibition catalogue. (Available online here: <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/arts-and-culture/city-gallery/exhibition-archive/Pages/Good-looking-portraits-from-the-City-of-Melbourne-collection.aspx>)

# Assessment of Cultural Heritage Significance

## Application of Victoria’s Framework of Historical Themes

The Victorian framework, rather than the Australian Historic Themes Framework, has been applied in keeping with the collection’s focus and scope on ‘Kew and its environs’, and the KHS’s use of this Framework when planning exhibitions and doing other work. Nonetheless, there are items in the collection that have relevance beyond state borders.

Weighing up the organisation’s collection against the Framework enables an understanding of how well it supports the intended focus and scope and where the gaps and strengths lie.

The left column below lists themes that apply to the history of Kew, and to Victoria and even Australia more generally. The right column offers one or two examples of collection items that reflect the theme.

Relevant themes	Examples of collection items
<b>Theme 1:</b> Shaping Victoria’s environment	
1.1 Tracing climate and topographical change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MMBW Contour Plan of Melbourne &amp; Suburbs: Melbourne Sewerage, dated 1894.</li> </ul>
1.5 Living with natural processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MMBW maps that show topographical features of the landscape and with successive Yarra flood levels marked in ink.</li> <li>• Many photographs of Yarra River floods from 1916 onwards</li> </ul>
1.6 Appreciating and protecting Victoria’s natural wonders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nicholas Caire’s Views of Victoria - General Series (1874)</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2:</b> Peopling Victoria’s places and landscapes	
2.1 Living as Victoria’s original inhabitants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Nicholas Caire photograph from the ‘Views of Victoria: General Series’ showing Aboriginals gathering hops on a station in Bairnsdale, Gippsland.</li> </ul>
2.2 Exploring, surveying and mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MMBW plans, survey plans and maps, particularly the collection of 34 coloured and annotated detailed plans of Kew (1894-194)</li> <li>• Russell map of the fledgling Melbourne town (1836)</li> </ul>
2.4 Arriving in a new land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Framed copy of a testimonial presented to boatswain Uriah Whidycombe by passengers that arrived on the John Bunyan in 1852.</li> </ul>
2.5 Migrating and making a home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Back to Kew 1875’ map showing original land use and the locations where people settled</li> </ul>
2.7 Promoting settlement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The original indenture for the transfer of land at Crown Portion 86, Kew, comprises all the land between Cotham Road and High Street and on which a Mr Morgan built the first residential home in Kew in 1852. (Vaughan, Kew’s Civic History, p.194). The Morgan collection includes coloured photographic portraits of himself and his wife.</li> <li>• Real estate subdivision plans from the early decades of the 20th century.</li> </ul>

**Theme 3:**  
Connecting Victorians by transport and communications

3.1 Establishing pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boroondara Roads Board &amp; photographs of the new Victoria Street Bridge</li> </ul>
3.3 Linking Victorians by rail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early photos of the Railway viaduct (now the Chandler Highway Bridge) in the Kellett album (1891) when it was still being used for the Outer Circle Railway. The photo shows its original configuration.</li> </ul>
3.4 Linking Victorians by road in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MMBW maps and others in the map collection show the dates and development of significant roads in Kew such the Power Street and Cotham and Whitehorse Road.</li> <li>• There are a number of maps and photographs showing the ‘before and after’ of the Eastern Freeway construction.</li> </ul>
3.5 Travelling by tram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illustrated certificate presented to the first Chairman of the Melbourne Tramways Trust in 1886.</li> </ul>

#### Theme 4:

#### Transforming and managing land and natural resources

4.4 Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A hand drawn map entitled ‘Site of the first house in Kew Central. On the site of the former Kew Court House and Police Station’ – triangle of land between Cotham and High St. Detailed description of domestic farming indicating location and name of all trees, flowerbeds, beehives, garden beds, house plan etc.</li> <li>• The Kellett photo album (1891) includes rare and often unique plates of farmland by the Yarra River and at the Kew Asylum</li> </ul>
4.7 Transforming the land and waterways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artwork by an anonymous artist from c.1896, which depicts the view over East Kew towards Heidelberg, with King Lake in the distance. This artwork is significant as it shows land use, development and settlement in the local area. The painting also confirms that, right up to High Street, East Kew was still farmland until the 1890s.</li> <li>• Oil painting from 1906 by William Nichols Anderson of Park Street (now Adeney Avenue)</li> </ul>

#### Theme 5:

#### Building Victoria’s industries and workforce

5.3 Marketing and retailing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnard pharmaceutical dispensary books</li> </ul>
5.4 Exhibiting Victoria’s innovation and products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some examples from the costume collection such as the Oggi Fashion House cream wedding dress (1971); the ice green pleated dress designed by Prue Acton in the 1960s.</li> </ul>
5.5 Banking and finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Bank of Australasia (Kew) signature books (1884 to 1922)</li> </ul>
5.6 Entertaining and socialising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kew Recreation Hall – scrapbooks and theatre and musical programs from the 1940s-1960s.</li> <li>• City of Kew civic printed ephemera, including invitations, programs for events, entry cards etc.</li> <li>• Some examples from the costume collection, particularly the sub-collections donated by Coombs, Weir and McIntyre.</li> </ul>
5.8 Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kew flyer bicycle and the dispensary and banking signature books.</li> </ul>

#### Theme 6:

#### Building towns, cities and the garden state

6.1 Establishing Melbourne Town, Port Philip District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russell map of the fledgling Melbourne town (1836)</li> </ul>
6.3 Shaping the suburbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MMBW plans of Kew and surrounding suburbs, donated by City of Kew Engineer's Department in 1989. One example being Detail Plan No. 1576 showing the block bound by Cotham Road, Charles, Wellington and Gillbrand streets in which only one house of those built in 1903 remains today.</li> <li>• Real estate subdivision plans of Studley Park Estate, and other areas.</li> </ul>
6.7 Making homes for Victorians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kew Asylum – original photographs, documents, maps, conservation studies</li> <li>• Ordsall / Southesk – photographs, paintings, the three plaster mural fragments</li> <li>• Photographs of Kew homes and mansions, many no longer existing</li> <li>• Papers of Irena Higgins and her work for emergency housing</li> </ul>

### Theme 7:

#### Governing Victorians

7.1 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayoral and other civic portraits collection, including the Halfey portraits</li> <li>• Reel-to-reel and digitised recording of Prime Minister Robert Menzies speaking at the opening of the new Kew City Hall on 13 December 1960. He spoke of the importance of local, state and federal government and of emerging and establishing democratic values.</li> </ul>
7.4 Defending Victoria and Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An original framed photograph of the unveiling of the Kew War Memorial on August 30, 1925.</li> <li>• Certificates presented to soldiers of Kew who returned from WW1.</li> <li>• Grigg collection of patriotic badges</li> </ul>
7.5 Protecting Victoria's heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documents relating to the Kew Court House</li> </ul>

### Theme 8:

#### Building community life

8.1 Maintaining spiritual life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photos and documents of the many churches in Kew</li> <li>• Boroondara Cemetery photographs</li> </ul>
8.2 Educating people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A panoramic photograph of the students and teachers from Woodbury College, Kew, in 1921.</li> <li>• A book of sewing samples produced by Emily Davies during the Plain Sewing Movement of the early twentieth century.</li> </ul>
8.3 Providing health and welfare services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photo of the opening of the Kew Baby Health Centre</li> <li>• Barnard Pharmacy dispensary books</li> <li>• Kew Ladies Benevolent Society minute book</li> <li>• Kew Asylum and Kew Cottages archival material</li> </ul>
8.4 Forming community organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East Kew Women's Club collection</li> <li>• Kew Lionesses Collection.</li> <li>• Kew Ladies Benevolent Society minute book.</li> </ul>
8.5 Preserving traditions and commemorating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayoral collection and civic photographs</li> <li>• Original photograph of 'Unveiling of the Kew War Memorial 1925'</li> <li>• Autograph book and Scrapbook in the Vaughan-Smith collection. These are beautiful examples of the art and tradition of scrapbooking and autograph collecting from the mid nineteenth century to the early twentieth century.</li> </ul>

8.6 Marking the phases of life

- In Memoriam: Annie Constance Springthorpe (1897).

### Theme 9:

#### Shaping cultural and creative life

9.1 Participating in sport and recreation

- Fairyland guest books.
- Photographs of sports groups, extinct and current.

9.2 Nurturing a vibrant arts scene

- Kew Recreation Hall & Kew Civic Hall – scrapbooks and theatre and musical programs from the 1940s-1960s.

## Application of *Significance 2.0* criteria

### Primary Criteria

#### *Historical significance*

The Kew Historical Society Collection holds material of huge significance to understanding the development of Kew, the surrounding suburbs that constitute Boroondara and beyond and, to a lesser extent, the state of Victoria. The collection represents the people who have lived and worked in Kew, as well as social and developmental changes since the mid-1800s. It is broad, varied and has considerable depth and breadth both thematically and temporally.

There are a few items and sub-collections possibly of state or national significance for their associations (ie Robert Russell's map, Prime Minister Menzies' Kew centenary speech, Josiah Barnes' portraits). Many costumes are associated with nationally significant designers (ie Prue Acton, Jinoel of Melbourne, Oggi Fashion House), or with donors who have made an impact on society at a local, state and national level. Likewise, parts of the Kew civic collection are associated with national and state significant mayors (ie Stanley Argyle, William Kerr). The coloured, annotated MMBW maps provide information about building materials and construction techniques not provided in the standard MMBW plans. It is also the case that the majority of people associated with the costume or mayoral portrait collections are not significant at a state or national level, which makes it difficult to argue significance at that threshold for the whole of each sub-collection. The mayoral portrait collection is associated with the important process of the founding and development of a constructive and vibrant municipal process in Victoria.

The picture collection, which includes the Mayoral portraits, has some items with high local significance such as the Josiah Barnes photograph 'Kew proclaimed a city', which was taken on that day – 10 March 1921, and the 'Unveiling of the Kew War Memorial' on August 30 1925 in front of an audience of over 5,000 people and presided over by the Kew Mayor and the Governor of Victoria. Both of these important images also have some significance to understanding the state and national processes of municipal development and memorializing war. The painting Adeney Avenue, Kew (1906) was painted by William Nichols Anderson who was secretary for the Victorian Artists Society 1915-19. This is an important historical document of the time as it shows the open landscape of central Kew at the time looking towards Cotham Road and a house that still exists today.

The early hand drawn map 'Back to Kew' (c.1875) is historically fascinating with its detail of the built, natural and social landscape of Kew, annotated and added to several times in subsequent decades to show the development of Kew. The drawing titled 'Site of the first house in Kew Central' (1852),

which records so meticulously the garden layout and tells such a detailed story of domesticity in the early days of settlement in this area, is a fascinating and a rare find in any local history collection, particularly as it enhances the original deed of conveyance that is also held in the collection.

#### *Aesthetic Significance*

The costumes and textiles have been collected for their expert design and craftsmanship and thus some are quite beautiful. There are some very beautiful pieces donated by notable Kew residents and designed by nationally significant designers. These are generally pieces made in the latter half of the twentieth century but the Kew collection also contains a number of beautifully crafted costumes from the nineteenth century. As a combined collection they reveal an important social history story about changes in fashion and design as well as choice and availability of fabrics.

The three fresco pieces from 'Southesk' demonstrate creative skill and high quality workmanship. Although only these three pieces remain, it is easy to imagine how beautiful the full frescoes would have been. The two Halfey portraits that are also associated with Southesk, and in the case of John Halfey with the very early civic history of Kew, are thought to have been painted by the same people responsible for the interior decoration of the house.

#### *Scientific or Research Significance*

Largely due to a strong degree of provenance across much of the collection the research value is high at a local, and even in some instances at a state level, for researchers of fashion, textiles and dressmaking; for political developments at a municipal level; for genealogy and family history of Kew residents; and for the development of a number of important institutions in Kew.

#### *Social or Spiritual Significance*

The public has access to collection items that are on display at the Kew Library and the Kew Court House during opening hours. The online record on *Victorian Collections* allows the public to view those items that have been digitised and uploaded (currently over 1800) at any time, and the Society is regularly contacted by researchers and the public through this website. Regular articles about specific pieces of the collection are included in the Society's newsletter. While the collection has long been considered a reliable and valuable repository for items or collections, exhibitions are frequent and are enjoyed by those who attend, and there is clear evidence that Kew HS volunteers who work with the collection recognize its importance, this is not enough for there to be any social significance in the collection.

### **Comparative Criteria**

#### *Provenance*

Provenance for the sub-collections that fall within the scope of the Community Heritage Grant (some costumes, the civic collection, the MMBW map collection) is strong, and therefore supportive of their historical, research and interpretive value. Where provenance has been missing the volunteers are attempting to rectify this by researching minutes of meetings, newsletters, miscellaneous documents, information inscribed on items, single year accession books and an Excel Spreadsheet which was established in 2016. As time goes on, and more research into the collection and specific items continues, the level of provenance will continue to increase.

### *Rarity and Representativeness*

The collection is both rare and representative. It contains many significant items that are specific to Kew and its history and so unavailable elsewhere. This is typical, and representative, of most local history focused historical societies. Where the Kew collection stands out is in the rarity of several parts of its collection, namely the coloured MMBW map collection, the Russell map of early Melbourne, the temporal extent of its costume collection, and some of the portraits. There are other elements of the entire collection that are rare, such as the clear recording of a speech by Prime Minister Menzies as he outlines his understandings of important civic and democratic processes, although these don't fall within the scope of the Community Heritage Grant.

### *Condition, Intactness and Integrity*

The condition of the collection varies enormously, although this is to be expected given the range of items; ie a damaged dress is likely to be thrown out while a damaged photograph album can still be enjoyed. Recently KHS has had the condition of some items and sub-collections professionally assessed and recommendations have been made for urgent conservation treatment. This assessment supports these recommendations.

The collection is now housed in acid free boxes and packaged with tissue paper or stored in plan drawers. Mothballs and silverfish baits serve as deterrents and there is only a little evidence of insects. There is evidence of shattered (damaged) silk in some of the dresses, and on the edging of the hexagon-patterned patchwork quilt.

In 2017 the City of Boroondara engaged a heritage consultant to review the mayoral portrait collection across Boroondara. Her assessment of KHS's collection condition is:

The mayoral photographs in the Kew Historical Society's collection, with one or two exceptions, are in excellent condition, however ... the frames and mounts require archival backing boards, and in several cases urgent repairs... the housing of the photographs is inadequate and ... a systematic pest control is also recommended<sup>36</sup>

### *Interpretive Capacity*

As the large number of exhibitions and the detailed quarterly newsletters indicate, the Kew Historical Society Collection has strong interpretive potential from which a number of stories can be told. The interpretive capacity for understanding the history of Kew and of wider stories on a state or national stage is very high.

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<sup>36</sup> Ann Carew, City of Boroondara Mayoral Portraits Project (excerpt), 2017

## Statement of Significance

This significance assessment is concerned with the costumes and textiles, the picture and the map collections of the Kew Historical Society. In addition, the collection as a whole includes manuscripts, archives, books, photographs, ephemera and some objects and audio-visual components. Comments are made in relation to these as they provide the context and the companions for the three sub-collections subject to this assessment.

The collection as a whole fulfills the criteria for very strong historical, aesthetic and research significance at a local level. It also has many outstanding associations with state themes, figures and events and quite a few that resonate at a national level.

The costume and textiles, map and picture collections each have very strong historical, research and aesthetic significance of their own accord. The degree of their significance is greatly enhanced by all of the comparative criteria: interpretive value, provenance, condition, integrity, rarity and representativeness.

The costume collection has a very high degree of aesthetic significance for its beauty, quality and workmanship. There are some items that are associated with nationally significant designers, or with Kew donors who have made an impact on society at a local and a state level (ie Prue Acton, Jinoel of Melbourne, Oggi Fashion House). The strong degree of provenance and high quality of the design and dressmaking that went into the production of these clothes strengthens the research significance of this sub-collection for those interested in fashion, textiles and dressmaking. This costume collection includes items that date back to the 1850s (patchwork Denbigh quilt) through to the 1980s, and that reflect changing styles, technologies, textiles and production methods.

The picture collection has some items that have high local significance such as the Josiah Barnes photograph 'Kew proclaimed a city', which was taken on that day – 10 March 1921, and the 'Unveiling of the Kew War Memorial' on August 30 1925 in front of an audience of over 5,000 people and presided over by the Kew Mayor and the Governor of Victoria. Both of these important images also have significance to state and national processes of municipal development and memorializing war.

The mayoral portraits (part of the picture collection) have a very high degree of historical and research significance for their associations, enhanced by strong provenance and technical qualities. Eminent photographers took many of the portraits and the subjects are people who have made a significant contribution to the welfare and development of Kew and, in the case of some of the Mayors in this collection, of the state or even the nation. This includes people such as Stanley Argyle (Premier of Victoria 1932-35) and William Kerr (influential businessman and federal government advisor in the early decades of the 20th century). The significance threshold of this sub-collection is therefore likely to be of state significance at the least.

The maps and plans number some 300 or more and include some fascinating and important maps beyond the MMBW sub-collection that, itself, holds some unique items and has been discussed at length in this report. Other much earlier and hand drawn maps such as 'Back to Kew' (c.1875) and 'Site of the first house in Kew Central' (undated) are historically fascinating. In the case of 'Back to Kew' it is the detail of the built, natural and social landscape of Kew, which was also annotated and added to several times in subsequent decades to show the development of the area. In the case of

'Site of the first house in Kew Central' it is the careful recording of the garden layout and the nature of domesticity in these early days of European settlement that is both fascinating and rare to find in any local history collection. While not all the items are original the map and plan collection has a very high degree of historical and research significance.

Provenance for much of the collection is strong, and therefore supportive of its historical, research and interpretive value. Certainly the interpretive capacity for understanding a detailed and nuanced history of Kew on many levels, as well as touching or reflecting on wider stories on a state or national stage is very high.

## Recommendations

1. Having become a member of Museums Australia (Victoria) we recommend and support
  - a. Enrolment in the Museums Accreditation Program to increase the profile of the Society and further develop its protocols and procedures.
  - b. Applying for the Roving Curator Program for guidance and support in developing future exhibitions.
2. Overall this collection has very few omissions when considered in the light of a local history collection; it includes a range of material culture as big or more than most local history societies, enables a very extensive thematic focus on Kew's history over a period of some 170 years, and offers opportunities for exploring state and national themes of history. Rather than considering 'omissions' it may be more effective to consider the 'focus'. This may be done by:
  - a. looking for opportunities to 'cross-fertilise' the different sub-collections, for example collecting more ephemera, documentation and clothing or accessories in relation to the Mayors of Kew to unite the costume and the mayoral portrait collection;
  - b. providing a balance or a comparison over time, for example balancing the collection of early MMBW maps and sub-division plans with a concerted effort to collect contemporary real estate brochures and house plans. Contemporary history is important to collect;
  - c. to follow b. above, bring the focus of all the sub-collections as much as possible into the 21st century. For example, encouraging donations of fashion items that have been made, sold and worn by Kew businesses and residents, or purchasing the same from local opportunity shops, will ensure the costume collection that has little to represent it beyond the 1980s can reflect contemporary styles as well as maintain a link with the local area.
3. The recommendations in point 2 above may pose a problem under current space constraints, as would any further acquisitions. If lack of space continues to be a problem a de-accessioning program may be required and professional guidance to assist it.
4. The Society's Mission and Aims refer consistently to 'Kew and its environs', which is a good description as the word 'environs' can be read to mean the social, political or cultural environment as well as the geographic location. The key is the relationship to Kew, which is important to maintain for a local history collection. Over the years the Society has occasionally collected items with a very tenuous or even non-existing link to Kew and its history. These may be special or fascinating but are otherwise random additions that don't assist a historical understanding of Kew, and could possibly find a more appropriate home in a costume or scrapbook collection for example. When acquiring new objects or collections it is recommended they have a clear and recognisable relationship with Kew. This ensures the collection as a whole maintains its integrity as a local history collection.
5. Local history collections invariably focus on their history since Europeans first arrived, so an almost constant omission across most local historical society collections is that of the local Indigenous history. It is recommended that acknowledgement, recognition and dissemination of

both the long Indigenous history and the contact history of the Woiwurrung, as represented by the Wurundjeri Land & Compensation Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, be undertaken. This would be in keeping with the third aim of KHS – ‘to stimulate our community’s interest in the economic, social, cultural and environmental history and heritage of Kew and its environs’. The Wurundjeri (<https://www.wurundjeri.com.au>) and the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (<http://www.vaclang.org.au/languages/woiwurrung.html>) are a good starting point.

6. In addition to the range of material in the KHS Collection, the research into collection items and thoughtful commentary that is compiled by volunteer members and published in the quarterly newsletter is extremely valuable to researchers as well as being of general interest to subscribers and members. It could be even more valuable if an index was built guiding readers to general topics as well as individual items or people, with the capacity to build on this index for future newsletters. It is recommended a professional digital indexer be engaged to assist with this task to ensure it is an effective and manageable tool that benefits compilers and researchers alike.
7. This Assessment supports any future application for a Preservation Needs Assessment through the Community Heritage Grants Program.
8. Digitise and transcribe the analogue-only material before it deteriorates. As a priority seek funding to have a verbatim transcript made of the speech given by Prime Minister Robert Menzies for the Kew Centenary in 1960 transcribed verbatim.
9. Very successful efforts have been made with cataloguing onto the Victorian Collections database to date. To assist and maintain these efforts, and to receive assistance with storage, contact the course coordinators of Deakin University’s Cultural Heritage program and the University of Melbourne’s Materials Conservations program to establish a student volunteer program.
10. Contact organisations such as AusStage (for the Kew Recreation Hall) or the Australian Women’s Archives Project to add Kew HS collection items to their databases.

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