

ND635

NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (VICTORIA)
LANDSCAPE SUBMISSION

NAME: Blackburn Lake and Bell Bird Streets

LISTING STATUS:

Regional Classification: A Regional Classification refers to a large area or region that contains a number of component Classifications individually listed. Classification means: "Those parts of the physical environment, both natural and man-made, which in the Trust's view are essential to the heritage of Australia and which must be preserved." Recorded means: "...those parts of the physical environment, both natural and man-made, which contribute to the heritage of Australia and which should be recorded and whose preservation is encouraged."

INVENTORY NO: L 382

LOCATION: City of Nunawading

BOUNDARIES: See Map.

Classified: Road reserve and front gardens of the following streets:

- Waradak Ges
- Jeffery Street
- Hill Street
- Boongarry Avenue Linum Street Laurel Grove (between Fuchsia Street and Creek) Acacia Avenue
- Blackburn Lake and land to east of Lake Reserve fronting on to Lake Road.
- Recorded: Furness Park and land to north of Lake Reserve fronting on to Central Road.

OWNERSHIP: Private, Nunawading City Council and M.M.B.W.

CITATION:

The area is an oasis in the suburbia in which it is now engulfed. The lake and its environs remain largely in their natural condition, providing a haven for over 165 bird species. The area is renowned for its Bell Miners; a breeding colony of Regent Honey-eaters (which breed normally in northern Victoria); as a resting place for certain migratory bird species (rufous fantail and satin fly-catcher, etc.), and for large numbers of water fowl, many breeding. The second Victorian recording of the Koel (a cuckoo) in 1976 was in the Lake Reserve.

The streets extending outwards from the Lake are an integral part of the ecology of the Lake area, being corridors of movement, particularly for birds. These private streets have resisted the pressures of normal street-making requirements and retain a quiet, almost rural character unique in Melbourne. They demonstrate an excellent integration between the natural and man-made environments. The natural vegetation, bird life and informal roads and gardens combine to provide a rare example of *rus in urbe*. The importance of the environmental values provides a major link between residents and has led to greater social cohesiveness.

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THREATS:

Road construction; increased traffic flow; inappropriate "suburban" housing and gardening styles; heavy and inappropriate usage of Lake Reserve.

DESCRIPTION:

The streets referred to vary greatly both in their general appearance and in particular detail. Jeffery and Linum Streets are the most consistent and visually unified streets whilst the others vary in quality from very good to poor. The poorer areas are generally the result of several of the following factors: -tree canopy does not extend over road; too much variation in colour of vegetation; deep gutters on either side of road; presence of front fences; fussy garden details: dominance of a building over the landscape; absence of tall, native vegetation on road verge. Despite these faults, the area nevertheless has a sense of unity overall a sense of place" which sets it apart from the surrounding areas.

The lake area also varies in quality. At its worst there are large areas where sheet erosion has resulted from intensive use around barbeque areas. At its best there are tranquil winding tracks passing through dense indigenous forest. Regeneration is being successfully undertaken by sensitive management systems operated by local residents.

Jeffery Street runs across a small valley, winding across a bridge at its lowest point in the middle. This bridge and its associated footbridge are rural in character and complement the general environment of the street. They are in fact the focal points of the entire street and help both visually and socially to tie it together. The bridges, vegetation and general rural character of the street give it a character almost unique for a suburban street.

The two Recorded areas do not have high aesthetic value. However, they both have potential for sensitive development, compatible with the general character of the Classified areas, Furness Park is an important visual and ecological link between the streets to the west of Main Street and the Classified areas to the east. The Recorded area to the north of the Lake Reserve has the potential to almost double the area of the Lake Reserve.

COMMENDATIONS:

1. Lake Area

- (a) The area owned by Camberwell Grammar be purchased and incorporated in the Lake Reserve.
- (b) That a comprehensive land-use and management study be undertaken to ensure the preservation of the environment, and determine activities and management policies compatible with this aim. This study should include the Recorded area to the north of the Lake Reserve.

2. Streets

- (a) A varied planting of indigenous trees and taller shrubs be encouraged along road verges. This will:-
 - (i) visually unify the streets by concealing various architectural and gardening styles.
 - (ii) assist in visually blocking out poles and overhead wires.
 - (iii) create a canopy over the road itself and give the streets a more intimate character.

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- (iv) give the street an even greater "sense of place".
- (b) The species selected for road verges be kept to a minimum (approx. 10) in order to achieve (i) and (iv) above.
- (c) Additional planting on private property should be encouraged using predominantly indigenous material.
- (d) Front fences be removed where possible.
- (e) A properly formed road drainage system be constructed to prevent erosion of natural drainage lines. This could take the form of a simple grass swale which could be mown or an unobtrusive bitumen roll kerb. Neither solution need give the streets a hard edge appearance if sensitively handled.
- (f) Traffic volumes to be kept to present levels by whatever means are available.
- (g) Rationalize and reduce overhead wires in streets. Ideally the power lines should be undergrounded.
- (h) Buildings in the area should be sympathetic to the streetscape in terms of form, colour, siting, scale and materials.
- (i) Inappropriate landscape elements such as rockeries and some planting and fences, etc. should be removed.

REFERENCES

1. *An Alternative Residential Street*, Peter Cullen. Habitat Australia, Vol. 3, No. 5
2. *Background Notes: Jeffery Street*, (March 1976) National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
3. *Bell Miners in the Melbourne Area*, E. McCulloch and F. Noelker, Victorian Naturalist, Vol. 91, No. 11 (November 1974)
4. *Blackburn Lake*, J. F. Field, Victoria's Resources, Vol. 12, No. 4 (December 1907 February 1971)
5. *Blackburn Lake: Report to the Minister for Local Government* (c. 1972) Blackburn Lake Committee of Management.
6. *Consultant's Report on Proposed Road Closures in the Blackburn Lake Area*, (November 1975), Urban Systems Corporation Pty. Ltd.
7. *Mobility in Scenic Areas*, Loder and Bayly, (December 1975)
8. *The Road Closure Issue in Blackburn*, pamphlet by Nunawading City Council
9. Comments by Professor J. S. Turner, March 1976.