

## HCA 33 Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area (Tempe)

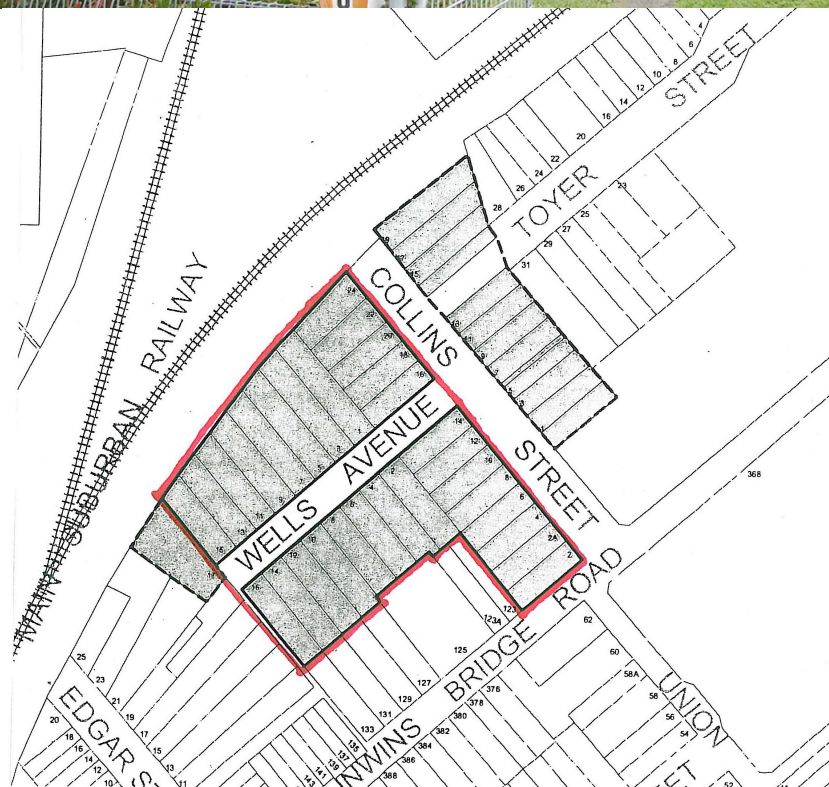


Figure 33.1 HCA 33 – Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area



### 33.1 LOCATION

The Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area includes Wells and the western side of Collins Street between the Illawarra railway line and Unwins Bridge Road south of Tempe High School, Tempe.



Figure 33.2 The Area in 1943 and 2009 (source: NSW Lands Department SIX Viewer)

### 33.2 DESCRIPTION

The Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area is a small area that is characterised by its cohesive grouping of Inter-War bungalows and split-level streetscape.

The area was formed in the 1920s by the subdivision of the estate surrounding the 1850's house Leinster Hallxx which survives with frontage to Unwins Bridge Road. The land slopes steeply away from the rear of the house to the west and the development in the area is characterised by its response to the fall in topography, with Wells Street being split-level to enable it to service the houses on each side of the hill, and the bungalows in Collins Street stepping down the hillside in a regular rhythm. The houses on the high side of Wells Avenue are built on substantial rough-finished sandstone bases, as is the retaining wall supporting the eastern side of Wells Avenue.

The houses are modest in scale and likely to have been built by the same builder as they demonstrate a strong consistency in their design and detailing. Most are the smaller variant of the Californian (or Sydney) bungalow, with only two gables to the street elevation and a lower-pitched roof over the porch which is accessed from a side-opening door from the front room only. The low-pitched roofs to the porches are supported by heavy splayed pillars which are characteristic of the bungalow style. The front door is situated mid-way down the side (driveway) elevation.

The original face brickwork is dark – with some being the increasingly rare Sydney manganese black brick. Brickwork extends to two-thirds the way up the window height, with painted rough-cast finish above to the roof plate, as well as to the chimney. Commons are used to the minor elevations. The only original house which is significantly different in its façade is at the eastern corner of the intersection of Wells Avenue and Collins Street, which addresses the corner.

Most roofs are dark red or brown low-glazed Marseilles pattern tiles, although some are clad in asbestos-cement shingles laid on the diagonal.

Many of the houses are substantially intact, the most common alteration being the enclosure of the porch in lightweight materials. Some have however made more substantial changes including the rendering and painting of brickwork, and in the case of 7 Wells Avenue, the front façade and roof form was remodelled in the Austerity hip-roofed style.

Setbacks are narrow – generally 3-4 metres and are mostly uninterrupted by carports or garages. Side setbacks are also consistent and demonstrate the increasing suburbanisation of Marrickville's suburbs by the offsetting of each house on its lot to allow space for a side driveway. This consistency has enabled the strong streetscape rhythms of the bungalow style to remain the most prominent element in the streetscape.

Many properties have retained their original dual-track driveways with grass between, which is an important and increasingly rare detail. At least one property (3 Wells Avenue) has retained an early garage; and 6 Wells Avenue has an even rarer single path to a lattice screen at the rear building line which separates the side and rear gardens. Several houses on the 'high' side of Wells Avenue have created a garage opening (roller door) to the sandstone undercroft area.

Some houses have retained their original front fences, including low walls built of face brick to match the house and finished with exceptional attention to detail, with dentilation and castellation. Several of the houses on the western side of Wells Avenue have retained their original pipe and mesh fence with pedestrian/wide driveway gate, a form and material which is increasingly rare. The 'safety' fence to the upper level of Wells Avenue is of similar design although of later construction. Other fences are ARC welded utility fences, low flat-topped pickets and rendered brick with worked steel infill panels. One has been removed and replaced by a low wall of horizontal timber. All fences are low.

The area also includes two single-storey shops at the corner of Collins Street and Unwins Bridge Road which although now painted for use as signwriting business have retained their original scale and form, including the ingo shopfront to Collins Street.



The kerbing to both streets is dark bullnosed brickwork, and the footpaths to Wells Avenue are paved in bricks laid in the herringbone pattern. Some driveway crossings have been re-laid in brick although others have been cut-through in concrete – which interrupts the continuity of the streetscape. Openings have been created in the brickwork for street trees, which are 1970's period native plantings. The main significant trees in the area are the mature Frangipani in the front garden of number 6 Wells Street and the large Camphor-laurel behind houses in Wells Avenue which provides a soft backdrop to the roofscape, and the relatively young Canary Island Palm in the front garden of 9 Wells Avenue.

The following figures illustrate the main elements and characteristics of the Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area.



Figure 33.3 The streetscape of Wells Avenue is a distinctive one due to the split-level roadway across the steep fall of the land from Unwins Bridge Road towards the railway line.



Figure 33.4. The houses on the southern side of Collins Street also step down to accommodate the fall of the land.



Figure 33.5 and 33.6. The split-level street configurations provides opportunities for appreciation of the consistent roofscape provided by a row of intact Californian bungalows from a perspective not often available.





Figure 33.7 the sloping topography also provides opportunities for views over the rear roofscape of the houses Collins Street. The consistent design of the cottages without major additions to the rear and survival of the chimneys enhances the aesthetic quality of this view. The modest scale and form of the Californian bungalow is appreciated readily within the Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area.



Figure 33.8. An important element of the Wells Avenue streetscape is the survival of the 1930s Depression Employment Relief Scheme brick paving with bull nosed edging. Although patched in places its herringbone patterning adds an important texture to the streetscape.



Figure 33.9 A modest shop contemporary with the houses is located at the top of Collins Street at the intersection with Unwins Bridge Road. Although occupied by a site writer and heavily decorated, the configuration of the original shopfront is substantially intact.



Figure 33.10. Most of the houses within the area are a simplified version of the usual Californian bungalow, with a hipped roof over the porch and front window instead of the more common triple gable form. Their access is provided through a door on the side façade – both a space-saving device for these small cottages as no central hallway was required; and reflecting the emerging importance of the motor car as the primary method of arrival. Each is offset on its lot to allow a side driveway.





Figure 33.11. Note the splayed and rendered verandah posts and the oblique glazing bars to the casement windows. Note also the use of plain common brickwork to the 'blind' side elevations.



Figure 33.12. Although substantially identical, the houses in the group are distinguished by minor differences in detail such as the pattern of gable strapping.



Figure 33. 15. Looking up Collins Street towards Unwins Bridge Road from the corner of Wells Avenue. The stepped roof form is clearly evident. Note also the lack of unifying street planting. Collins Street was not part of the brick paving scheme, possibly because of its steep fall.-



Figure 33. 16. The house on the corner of Collins Street and Wells Avenue is different in design to the others in the group. Before the verandah was enclosed it would have addressed the corner.





Figure 33.17. Wells Avenue



Figure 33.18. Wells Avenue. Although early driveway crossings were formed from brick and read as part of the main footpath, later crossings are concrete and interrupted the visual continuity of the paving.



Figure 33.19.. This house is situated high above Wells Avenue and a garage has been created below the house.



Figure 33.20. This house is highly intact to the extent where the original pedestrian width concrete path to the front door has never been converted to a driveway. The retention of such an ephemeral feature is very rare.



Figure 33.21 and 33.22. These two examples have both been modified by the replacement of timber windows with aluminium frames but otherwise demonstrate a substantially intact exterior. The very modest scale of these bungalows has resulted in the main door being located on the side facade to save the space otherwise occupied by a central hallway. The side access can be seen in these photographs.





Figure 33.23. The contribution of repeated gable forms to the aesthetic quality of the streetscape can be seen through this photograph of the houses on the north-western side of Wells Street (low side) from Collins Street.



Figure 33.24. Although rendered and/or painted, the form of this cottage is substantially intact.



Figure 33.25. The houses on the low side of Wells Street were fenced by water pipe and wire fencing which was very popular as a low-cost alternative to the face brick fence.



Figure 33.26. A well maintained and highly intact example which includes the more 'standard' configuration of a third gable over the porch, although the front door is still located on the side façade. The dual use of the driveway opening with pedestrian and vehicular width gates can be seen to this property



Figure 33.27. This house has been modified through the enclosure of the verandah and the painting of the plasterwork in a bright colour. The underlying form is intact however and the changes are potentially reversible.



Figure 33.28. The sale of fencing to houses in Collins Street using decorative bricklaying techniques to create visual interest.



### 33.3 SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUES

Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area is of historical significance as an area developed from the 1924 "Moulden's Estate" subdivision, with most of the houses built in 1925 and 1926. The housing in the area represents the adaptation of a fashionable housing style to suit the budget of working and lower middle classes prior to the Great Depression.

The subdivision relates to the nearby tram depot, as tram employees purchased a number of the properties shortly after the 1924 subdivision. The Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area is of aesthetic significance for its strong patterns created by the consistently expressed built forms that are set to follow the fall of the land and demonstrate a strongly expressed and aesthetically prominent and cohesive streetscape group.

Detached Inter-War period double fronted bungalows with side entry door and no central hallway are represented: demonstrating the adaptation of the Californian bungalow into a smaller and simpler form for the lower-middle and working classes. It is also significant for demonstrating the survival of much original detailing, including highly consistent building style, scale and forms, prominent roofscape (from both front and rear/oblique) characteristic of the Inter-War period.

#### KEY PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1920 -1940

The Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area demonstrates heritage values that satisfy the NSW Heritage Council's Criteria for listing as a locally significant heritage conservation area. These values can be seen in the area in many ways, including:

Heritage Council Guideline for Inclusion satisfied	Crit.	Heritage value	How the value can be seen in the area today
The area maintains and shows the continuity of a historical process or activity	A	<p>The pattern of development in the area provides evidence of the historical process of small-scale speculative development. The Area was part of the area known as the Sydenham farms which was sold for residential development in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.</p> <p>The Area provides evidence of the mature suburban form of development in the Council area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The clear differentiation in the age and architectural style of the houses between the northern and southern sides of Collins Street demonstrates the sequential development of the individual lots within Sydenham Farms.</li> <li>– The houses of the area are of consistent scale, form, style and detailing. They provide clear evidence of the mature form of suburban development found in the Marrickville area.</li> </ul>
The area maintains and shows the continuity of a historical process or activity	A	<p>The patterns of development provide evidence of the historical process of small-scale speculative development</p> <p>The houses in the area were created through a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The development within the area is consistent in its stylistic period and architectural typology, providing evidence that the houses were built within a single subdivision release and within a</li> </ul>

Heritage Council Guideline for Inclusion satisfied	Crit.	Heritage value	How the value can be seen in the area today
		<p>two-stage release of land excised from the 1858 Nelson's Lodge (then known as Leinster Hall) property.</p> <p>Provides evidence of speculative re-subdivision and development of land in Sydney during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.</p>	<p>limited period of time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Although the built forms are highly consistent throughout the area and demonstrate construction by a single builder, the subtle differences in detailing within groups of houses demonstrate their sequential construction and sale.</li> <li>– The original house (Nelson's Lodge/Leinster Hall) from which the lots were subdivided has survived at 125 Unwins Bridge Road.</li> </ul>
The area demonstrates the principal characteristics of a class of Marrickville's cultural places (residential)	G	<p>It demonstrates the principal characteristics of the development of Marrickville from a rural Estate to residential area.</p> <p>The housing in the area demonstrates the adaptation of a fashionable housing style to suit the budget of working and lower middle classes prior to the Great Depression.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Through its original built forms which are representative of the cultural needs and aspirations of the community that built and occupied them; including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detached Inter-War period double fronted bungalows with side entry door and no central hallway: demonstrating the adaptation of the Californian bungalow for the lower-middle and working classes.</li> <li>• Low brick fences consistent with the built form</li> <li>• Fences constructed of water-pipe and woven mesh wire; with unevenly opening gates to allow pedestrian access via the driveway rather than a separate pathway</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Cultural layering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-War migration – minor evidence</li> <li>• contemporary gentrification - minor evidence</li> </ul>



Heritage Council Guideline for Inclusion satisfied	Crit.	Heritage value	How the value can be seen in the area today
The area demonstrates the principal characteristics of a class of the Marrickville areas' cultural places (business)		<p>It demonstrates the principal characteristics of the development of the Marrickville Council area from a rural to residential area.</p> <p>It demonstrates the principal characteristics of residential development associated with the activity of a local business.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The area contains a pair of single-storey local shops, one of which has retained its original shopfront form and detailing (although hidden by paint) – demonstrating the form and distribution of local retaining in the 1930s and 1940s.</li> </ul>
<p>The area demonstrates the principal characteristics of a class of Marrickville's cultural places (public domain)</p> <p>The area demonstrates attributes typical of the particular philosophy and design of Marrickville Council (and its predecessors)</p>	G	It demonstrates the principal characteristics of the development of the Council area from a rural Estate to a suburban cultural landscape and contains streetscapes and public domain elements representative of civic management and improvement programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bullnose brick kerbing (Collins Street and Wells Avenue)</li> <li>– Face brick footpath paving to Wells Avenue laid originally during the Great Depression as a work relief scheme.</li> <li>– Predominantly paved/concreted footpath with small openings cut for street tree plantings.</li> <li>– Street tree planting of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century Environmental movement (native species)</li> </ul>
The area contains groups and streetscapes which collectively illustrate representative types of Marrickville's cultural landscape.	G	It contains buildings and elements of individual and group aesthetic value that create a streetscape with strong rhythmic and textural values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The aesthetic values of the group and its streetscape are derived from the strong patterns created by the consistently expressed built forms that are set to follow the fall of the land and demonstrate a strongly expressed and aesthetically prominent and cohesive streetscape group which also demonstrates the survival of much original detailing, including:</li> <li>– Highly consistent building style, scale and forms</li> <li>– Prominent roofscape (from both front and rear/oblique) composed of</li> </ul>

Heritage Council Guideline for Inclusion satisfied	Crit.	Heritage value	How the value can be seen in the area today
			<p>forms characteristic of the Inter-War period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Medium setbacks from all boundaries; one side sufficient to allow vehicular access.</li> <li>– All houses double-fronted with small porch only accessible from within house</li> <li>– Main door to house situated behind front rooms on driveway side</li> <li>– Configuration of facades with face brickwork to lower 2/3 and painted roughcast finish above</li> <li>– Use of materials</li> <li>– Face brickwork</li> <li>– Low solid fencing constructed of brick to match the house with decorative brickwork detailing that adds texture to the streetscape. Rear fences traditional timber paling.</li> <li>– Setbacks and front garden spaces highly consistent within the streetscape group.</li> </ul>

### 33.4 DEFINING THE EXTENT OF THE HERITAGE CONSERVATION AREA

The boundaries of the heritage conservation area are defined by the ability of properties to demonstrate the identified heritage values. The area includes only those properties within the subdivision and streetscape. The surrounding areas demonstrate architectural characteristics of different periods or land uses and/or do not possess the high level of integrity that Wells Avenue/Collins Street does.

### 33.5 ELEMENTS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AREA

The table above outlined the ways in which the heritage significance of the Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area are expressed through the contemporary cultural landscape.

The relevant planning controls to conserve the evidence of the area's heritage significance are contained in the Suburban Residential Streetscapes section of the DCP (see the DCP for details).

The Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area also contains many details, or fine-grained elements that are found throughout the area on buildings of different styles and types that contribute to the integrity and heritage significance of the area. The elements are not found on all buildings; but if they are present they need to be retained in any new development. Further details about how to protect these details and incorporate them in new development can be found in the detailed DCP sheets.

**SUBDIVISION AND PUBLIC DOMAIN ELEMENTS:**

- Responses to topography
- Street layout – split levels and sandstone retaining wall
- Regular subdivision configuration
- Brick-paved footpaths with bullnosed coping to kerbs
- Front setback - Garden or soft surface
- Detached, low density character
- Consistent roofscapes from viewpoints – including over the rear elevations (including intact chimneys)
- Driveways constructed of two wheel tracks with central grass strip

**ELEMENTS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONSISTENCY OF THE STREETScape (VISIBLE FROM THE PUBLIC DOMAIN)**

- Residential character demonstrated through the consistency of the bungalow typology
- Substantially intact group demonstrating key elements (scale, form and detailing) of the modest Californian Bungalow style
- Range of fine-grained stylistic variation within a highly consistent overall built form
- Individual dwellings of highly intact original aesthetic value
- Building typologies reinforce the suburban grain.
  - Houses demonstrate strong streetscape qualities through cohesiveness of built form, scale, rhythm and materials.
  - High quality detailing to front elevation of intact and substantially intact houses appropriate to the period and style of the dwelling
  - Increasing simplification of scale and detailing towards rear – including window size, bulk and visual prominence in view from street
- Roof forms appropriate to typology and period of construction
  - Good quality roofscape views, including over rear roofs due to topography
  - Roof forms of groups or runs of buildings demonstrating consistent pitch and rhythm
  - Intact roof forms and volumes – including low-pitch roof to porch (most); third gable to porch (remainder)
  - Where original roof cladding has been replaced, use of low-glazed dark red or brown terracotta tile (NOT orange unglazed)
  - Original chimneys contribute to the quality and visual interest of roofscapes
- Intact or substantially intact built elements
  - Consistency of form and detailing to intact and substantially intact original dwellings and streetscapes
  - Any additions visible from the public domain that are of a minor scale, respect original built form and are unobtrusive in the context of the streetscape
- Building heights appropriate to architectural type and responding to local topography.
- Original detailing to elevations consistent with the simple and rustic qualities of the Californian bungalow in Sydney
  - Un-painted and un-rendered face brickwork
  - Light painted roughcast above eyelevel to front façade



- Main 'front' door inset on side (driveway) elevation
- Porch access via door from front room to side
- Heavy splayed roughcast cement columns supporting porch
- Timber framed casement windows set in groups of three
  - Glazing bars configured consistently throughout area
  - Timber framed windows
  - Original Art Deco style lead lighting to windows facing street
  - Use of appropriate colour schemes for detailing
- Fences appropriate to typology and period of construction
  - Low brick fences to street elevation – constructed of finely detailed face brick with dentilation/castellation to match the house
  - Fences constructed of water-pipe and woven wire with asymmetrical gate to driveway to create a 'pedestrian' entry
- Lack of car parking infrastructure forward of the building line

#### **ELEMENTS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE INTEGRITY OF THE OVERALL PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA (NOT NECESSARILY VISIBLE FROM THE STREET)**

- Footprints of additions to the rear respect the traditional pattern of development (including the recessive scale of skillion-roofed extensions)

### **33.6 ELEMENTS THAT DETRACT FROM THE HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AREA**

The Wells Avenue Heritage Conservation Area includes some high quality individual examples of buildings that are substantially intact but most houses have been altered in some way since they were built. This pattern of change is continuing, with evidence of recently completed layers found during fieldwork. Some of these contribute to the cumulative heritage significance of the area, but others do not because they are of an irreversible nature, destroy original fabric or result in major changes to the form of the house visible from the street. These include:

- Rendering of face brickwork
- Removal of original detailing
- Infill of front porches
- Application of conjectural detailing
- Addition of panels to increase the height of the front fence
- Replacement fences of type or form inappropriate to building typology and/or intrusive on aesthetic value of streetscape