

Heritage Citation – Individual Place

Heritage Place: Dandenong Road, London Plane and Canary Island Palm Street Trees

Address: Dandenong Road, Armadale

Designer: N/A

Builder: N/A

HO Reference: HO755

Citation status: Final

Date Updated: 28 March 2022

Year of Construction: 1912-1913



Photograph of the Dandenong Road street trees (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Location map and extent of the Dandenong Road street trees within the municipality.

Heritage Group: Parks, gardens and trees

Heritage Type: Tree

Significance Level: Local

Key Theme: Building suburbs

Key Sub-theme: Creating leafy suburbs

Recommendation: Recommended for the Heritage Overlay as an individual place; tree controls recommended in relation to the London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) and Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*).

Controls:	<input type="checkbox"/> External paint colours	<input type="checkbox"/> Internal alterations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tree controls
	<input type="checkbox"/> Victorian Heritage Register	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporated Plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Outbuildings and fences exemptions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prohibited uses may be permitted	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Heritage Place	

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) and Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) street trees along Dandenong Road, Armadale, (otherwise known as the Dandenong Road London Plane and Canary Island Date Palm Street Trees), are significant. Specifically, the uniformity, regular spacing, scale and length of the double row of mature trees, along with the grass median strip and bluestone curb and guttering are of local significance.

How is it significant?

The Dandenong Road London Plane and Canary Island Date Palm Street Trees is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The Dandenong Road London Plane and Canary Island Date Palm Street Trees are historically significant as part of a liberal tree planting scheme in 1912-1913, forming part of the interwar trend of street beautification. The planting scheme was a co-operative effort between the then Malvern, Prahran, St Kilda and Caulfield Councils following the completion of the Dandenong Road tramway. The trees were established as a substantial and continuous line of London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) and Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) trees through the suburbs of Malvern, Armadale, St Kilda and Windsor. The trees form a tangible link to a period of urban development that solidified Stonnington's reputation as a leafy and tree dense municipality. They also comprise part of one of the longest and oldest interwar street plantings in metropolitan Melbourne. (Criterion A)

The Dandenong Road London Plane and Canary Island Date Palm Street Trees are aesthetically significant as visually prominent and picturesque landscape features along a major arterial road. Key attributes contributing towards their aesthetic significance include the high integrity, maturity, uniformity, regular spacing, scale and formal arrangement of the street trees, as well as the grassy median strips and remnant bluestone curb and guttering. Together, they form an important landmark and streetscape component of the major thoroughfare. (Criterion E)

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	<i>Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history</i>	The Dandenong Road London Plane and Canary Island Date Palm Street Trees are historically significant as part of a liberal tree planting scheme in 1912-1913, forming part of the interwar trend of street beautification. The planting scheme was a co-operative effort between the then Malvern, Prahran, St Kilda and Caulfield Councils following the completion of the Dandenong Road tramway. The trees were established as a substantial and continuous line of London Plane (<i>Platanus x acerifolia</i>) and Canary Island Date Palm (<i>Phoenix canariensis</i>) trees through the suburbs of Malvern, Armadale, St Kilda and Windsor. The trees form a tangible link to a
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		period of urban development that solidified Stonnington's reputation as a leafy and tree dense municipality. They also comprise part of one of the longest and oldest interwar street plantings in metropolitan Melbourne.
<i>B</i>	<i>Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
<i>C</i>	<i>Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
<i>D</i>	<i>Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
<i>E</i>	<i>Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics</i>	The Dandenong Road London Plane and Canary Island Date Palm Street Trees are aesthetically significant as visually prominent and picturesque landscape features along a major arterial road. Key attributes contributing towards their aesthetic significance include the high integrity, maturity, uniformity, regular spacing, scale and formal arrangement of the street trees, as well as the grassy median strips and remnant bluestone curb and guttering. Together, they form an important landmark and streetscape component of the major thoroughfare.
<i>F</i>	<i>Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
<i>G</i>	<i>Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
<i>H</i>	<i>Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.

Description

• Physical Analysis

Dandenong Road is a major, asphalt laid four lane bidirectional road that forms the southern boundary of the suburb of Armadale. It is oriented on an approximately east west axis before bending in a south-east direction heading east, and extends from an overbridge crossing the railway line south of Malvern Station. Major arterial roads connect and cross Dandenong Road, including Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn Road, Kooyong Road, Wattle tree Road and Orrong Road.

The opposite lanes of Dandenong Road are separated by a wide median strip. The median strip occupies a similar width proportion to the trafficable lanes and run the length of the road within and beyond the suburb boundary. Hawthorn, Kooyong, Wattle tree and Orrong Road have crossover junctions over the median strip. The median strip houses the Swanston tramway lines 'Melbourne University to Malvern via Windsor' and 'Melbourne University to East Brighton via Caulfield' routes. Eight tram stops along the tram line are within Armadale. Bluestone curb and guttering is preserved along several sections of the median strip on the roadside and edging the tram line. The north side of the median strip extending east from the junction with Kooyong Road is a substantial bluestone retaining wall and paved gutter.

The median strip includes flanking grass verges. The grass verges are planted with mature London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) and Canary Island Date Palm (*Pheonix canariensis*) street trees. London Plane trees are also planted in the flanking grass verges of Dandenong Road. Early pruning of the London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) trees has resulted in a vase shaped form, with the branches spreading from the top of the main trunk at about three metres in height. Several replacement trees have since been planted along the median strip and are substantially smaller compared to the mature trees.

The double row of matures trees on the median strip form a visually prominent element along the centre of Dandenong Road, creating a sense of landmark value. The structure and form of the Canary Island Date Palm (*Pheonix canariensis*) trees can be fully appreciated during the cooler months when the deciduous London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) trees have shed their leaves. The London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) trees provide a dense canopy and relief to the streetscape during the warmer months. Traditional white and green electricity posts servicing the tram line add to the established cohesive visual aesthetic of the overall road; they form HO30 Ornamental Tramway Overhead Poles.

• Alterations and Additions

- Sections of bluestone curb and guttering removed and paved in concrete.
- Some mature trees have been removed and replaced with young London Plane plantings.
- Metal traffic barrier added along sections of median strip outer edge.

History

• Historical Context

For thousands of years preceding European colonialism, the area now known as Stonnington was the traditional home of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung people of the Eastern Kulin Nation. This environment would have provided Traditional Owners with access to pre-contact plains, grassy woodland, and floodplains on the banks of the Yarra River (Birrarung), Gardiners Creek (Kooyong Koot), and Hawksburn Creek (now channelised), in a rolling landscape on the northern shore of Port Phillip Bay.

It is important to note that the rich cultural heritage of Traditional Owners in Stonnington did not end with colonialism—it has a rich presence to this day.

The first land sales in what would become Armadale began in 1854 following the surveying of Glenferrie Road and High Street. The suburb of Armadale was formally included in the City of Prahran and, as is the case with many of the suburbs in Stonnington and surrounds, it received its name from a lone but notable property. Armadale House was built by one James Munro, son of the first keeper of the Prahran pound. On arriving in Australia from his home in Sutherland, Scotland, Munro worked for the stationer business Fergusson and Moore—Fergusson being James Fergusson of Kooyong. Armadale House, built in c.1887, was the first of many grand houses constructed in the suburb in the late 19th century. Munro went on to become Premier of Victoria and, later, Attorney General, before losing all in the economic crash of the 1890s. Following the turn of the century, many of the original 19th century properties faced demolition and subdivision, encouraging growth in early 20th century and the interwar period. While Armadale today enjoys an affluent reputation for its association with the surrounding suburbs of Toorak, Malvern and Kooyong, traces of remnant working class houses can be seen at the small timber workers cottages present in some parts off High Street and near the border with Malvern (Cooper 1924, 268).

- **Place History**

The London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) and Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) trees along Dandenong Road were planted in 1912-1913, roughly two years after the opening on the Dandenong Road electric tramway in late 1911. While Stonnington's pleasant leafy character was initially rooted in the establishment of carefully landscaped private gardens on the large Victorian era estates of the wealthy, Council related street planting programs from as early as 1877 would solidify its reputation as a picturesque, tree-lined suburb into the early 20th century (Context Pty Ltd 2009, 149-150).

According to early historical records, official plans to plant trees along the Dandenong Road tram route can be traced back to November 1912, whereby the Malvern, Prahran, St Kilda and Caulfield councils set out the details for a program of tree planting along the tramway of Dandenong Road (The Prahran Telegraph 1912, 9). While the initial 1912 scheme resulted in the planting of London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) trees along the road reserves, the Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) trees were not planted until 1913. This delay was following deliberations by the Dandenong Road Improvement League and respective councils over the chosen species to be planted between the plane trees (Malvern Standard 1913, 12). A newspaper article from July 1913 tellingly reveals:

The Prahran Council notified that they had, provided the other councils fell into line, to plant suitable Australian trees and shrubs and palms, interspersed between the plane trees in the plantations in Dandenong Road. They asked if council would agree to the work... M'Nabb mentioned that there were 2000 flowering trees and shrubs in Victoria, suitable for the work, without using trees which were not native to Australia...He would like to have the plane trees taken away (Brighton Southern Cross 1913, 5).

While the planting of Australian native trees, shrubs and palms along Dandenong Road do not appear to have come into fruition, the establishment of the Canary Island Date Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) trees was soon carried out following co-operation between the respective councils. By c.1929, the Dandenong Road tram route was flanked by a picturesque line of plane and palm trees, garden beds and rock

edging. Although some trees have been replaced over time, the mature trees continue to form a key picturesque component of the major thoroughfare.

Comparative Analysis

As visually prominent street plantings along a major thoroughfare, the double row of mature street trees on Dandenong Road have landmark value. From a historical perspective, they also speak to Council efforts to beautify public avenues during the interwar period through coordinated tree planting schemes. As the sheer scale and length of these plantings are distinct from other Council initiated street plantings within the municipality, the following analysis draws from comparable examples elsewhere in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

Comparative examples include:

- **Canary Island Date Palm Avenue, Mt Alexander Road, Essendon (Moonee Valley City HO80).** This avenue of Canary Island Date Palms (*Pheonix canariensis*) on Mont Alexander Road, Essendon, is comparable to the Dandenong Road street trees as an impressively lengthy line of mature early 20th century introduced plantings along a tram line. While the avenue solely comprises Canary Island Date Palms (*Pheonix canariensis*) as opposed to the addition of London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) trees seen at Dandenong Road, they are nevertheless analogous in terms of integrity, uniformity, regular spacing and formal planting arrangement. As with the Dandenong Road trees, they form an integral streetscape and landmark component along a major thoroughfare. Established in 1929, they are slightly younger than those along Dandenong Road.
- **Canary Island Date Palm Row and Canary Island Pines, 399-413 Barkly Street, Footscray (Maribyrnong City HO94).** This row of Canary Island Date Palms (*Pheonix canariensis*) and pines is comparable to the plantings on Dandenong Road as a combination of introduced street plantings established during the interwar period. While the row is shorter in length than those at Dandenong Road, they are nevertheless similar in terms of maturity, consistency and visual prominence along a major thoroughfare. As the above example, they are also slightly younger however, having been planted between 1920-1935.

As the above comparative analysis has demonstrated, the Dandenong Road street trees are strong examples of major street plantings along a busy arterial road. They compare well to existing examples outside of the municipality that have been afforded local heritage protection. In addition to their uniformity, size and regular spacing, they comprise part of one of the longest and oldest interwar street plantings in metropolitan Melbourne.

References

Australian Trees in Dandenong Road. (1913, July 12). *Malvern Standard*, 5.

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Unknown. c.1929. Dandenong Road tram-reserve. Photograph. Prahan Collections, ref no. PH7437. Stonnington History Centre.

Limitations

1. Access to all heritage places was limited to a visual inspection from the public domain. The interiors of buildings and inaccessible areas such as rear gardens were not accessed as part of this heritage study.
2. Condition and site modification assessment was limited to a visual inspection undertaken from the public domain.
3. The historical notes provided for this citation are not considered to be an exhaustive history of the site.

Further Images



Photograph of Dandenong Road landscaping and tram reserve in c.1929 (source: Stonnington History Centre, c. 1929).



Photograph of Dandenong Road landscaping and tram reserve in c.1920. It is unknown if this image depicts the portion of Dandenong Road within the subject site, however (source: Stonnington Thematic Environmental History, c.1920).



East facing view of the Dandenong Road street trees (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



North-east facing view of the Dandenong Road street trees (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



North-west facing view of the Dandenong Road street trees (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail north-east view of the Dandenong Road street trees (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of bluestone curb (source: Google Streetview, 2019).



Detail view of concrete curb (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



North-west facing view of Dandenong Road street trees in summer (source: Google Streetview, 2019).



North-east facing view of Dandenong Road street trees in summer (source: Google Streetview, 2019).

Authors

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Quality assurance review conducted by: Corinne Softley.