

GRACEBURN

Address	38 Quinn Street, Heidelberg
Significance	Local
Construction Date	1905-6
Period	Federation
Date Inspected	January 2021



Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

Graceburn at 38 Quinn Street, Heidelberg, is significant. The house was constructed between 1905 and 1906, likely by Charles Rouch for its long-term original occupants, Edward and Alice Rouch.

The significant elements are the house's broadly symmetry, gambrel roof, red-brick chimney, raised return verandah with small central gable and squared timber posts, projecting gable wing (north), walls of painted weatherboard, entrance door, timber-framed and double-hung sashes, faceted bay windows, and all external timber decoration.

Later additions to the house are not significant.

The general garden setting is complementary to *Graceburn*; however, specific landscape elements, including plantings, garage and tennis court, are not significant.

How is it Significant?

Graceburn is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Banyule.

Why is it Significant?

Graceburn is of historical significance as a commodious timber residence constructed during the early Federation period for, and likely by, the Rouch family – locally well-known owners of a Heidelberg timber mill. It illustrates an important pattern in the growth and consolidation of Heidelberg; the establishment of large-scale, often distinctive, dwellings within sizable holdings by the affluent that were subdivided decades later, particularly as the area underwent more intensive growth in the wake of the Second World War. The survival of *Graceburn* following the 1956 sale of its originally expansive grounds and their subsequent development appears uncommon for Banyule. In most cases, the original house was demolished as part of the breakup. More generally, few timber buildings from the early 1900s remain in the municipality, particularly those that illustrate the Federation Bungalow style, of which the residence is a relatively early example. *Graceburn*'s continued prominence to the public realm, engineered as part of its subdivision, assists in marking it out as a building of some note. When viewed within the broader context of surrounding postwar and contemporary dwellings, the house's Federation character can evoke contemplation of an earlier phase in the locale's evolution, allowing for an interpretation of the residence as the erstwhile centrepiece of a large property. (Criterion A)

Graceburn is of aesthetic significance as a largely intact and considerable instance of the more infrequently seen Federation Bungalow style, which referenced established and emergent domestic design trends – prefacing the wholesale embracement of the bungalow over a decade later. Its overall restrained character is indicative of the more relaxed bungalow mode, while the still widespread penchant for the picturesque is met subtly in the pleasing composition of the façade and north elevation. In combination, the dominant gambrel roof, raised verandah and (the less typical) near symmetry of the façade endow *Graceburn* with a stately character. An effect heightened by the employment of solid decorative timber elements to the verandah creating a screen-like effect, which encourages the strong interplay of light and shadow to the façade. The pronounced utilisation of timber throughout the house also reflects the pervading influence of the Arts & Crafts movement in the period and its interest in 'honest' and 'natural' materials. (Criterion E)

Description

The single-storey residence is situated at a moderate setback from the east side of Quinn Street on a large and irregularly shaped allotment, which rises gently towards the rear of the property. The house is situated near the southern boundary with a concrete driveway, open area and small gabled/timber shed to the north side, and a tennis court to the rear. It is likely that the hitch in Quinn Street, laid to facilitate the subdivision and development of *Graceburn*'s former grounds, was included to preserve sightlines to and from the dwelling's north elevation.

Graceburn has an attractive garden setting, although existing landscaping stems from late 20th-century activity. Outside the mature Golden Elm (*Ulmus glabra*) and Golden Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) that flank the driveway (left and right, respectively), plantings are generally low, which allows for broad views to the dwelling from the street.



View to rear garage and north elevation with projecting gabled wing

The house is of timber-framed construction with walls clad in painted weatherboard. It is capped by a prominent high-pitched gambrel roof clad in short-length corrugated metal sheeting.¹ The original roof cladding is unclear, terracotta tiles, slate, or metal sheeting are all possibilities. A gabled wing is present to the north elevation (half-timbering and roughcast end). The hipped wing to the rear is original, although it has a skillion-roofed addition attached to its eastern face. The adjacent rear verandah has been enclosed with weatherboard and boxed windows.² Only one of the three tall red-brick and corbelled chimneys with rendered cap remains on the south side.

The main roof encompasses the verandah with a 'broken back' (change from a steeper to lower pitch). A small gable with horizontal timber boards surmounts the central part of the verandah, emphasising the entry sequence to *Graceburn*. The allusion to symmetry is disrupted by the northern gable wing, which is visible within the frontage of *Graceburn*.

The verandah is raised and extends across the full width of the façade and returns on the south side. It is supported by squared timber posts in pairs (three at the corners) and detailed with a mostly solid, arched (depressed) frieze with small cut-out motifs and ogee profile brackets interspersed with slatted sections. A short set of stairs, clad in later addition bricks, leads to the front door. The latter, which is obscured by a contemporary metal screen, features timber-framed sidelights with toplights and a transom window.

Flanking the entrance are faceted tripartite bay timber-framed windows, composed of a central casement with toplight and double-hung sashes. At the north end of the verandah wall is a double-hung sash. A pair of sashes are also evident to the face of the north wing. Views to windows on the south elevation are unavailable.

Graceburn is broadly indicative of the Federation Bungalow style, a transitional design mode that intermixed the older homestead and bungalow (adopted from the Indian subcontinent) tradition with the emergent contemporary bungalow designs arriving from North America. Concurrently, it synthesised was a continuing interest in the picturesque, although tempered from its often-elaborate Queen Anne renderings. The hybrid design outcomes, more generally seen in the years on either side of the First World War, varied but generally manifested as unpretentious and assertive, revolving around uncomplicated massing, commanding roofs, and pared-down decoration. The relative challenge of successfully reconciling different idioms meant the Federation Bungalow style was less popular with speculative designer/builders and is more often associated with higher-end development. As with most design currents in the Federation years, the Arts & Crafts movement was influential. A fact reflected at *Graceburn* by its utilisation of material palette – timber and some roughcast – that would have been perceived as 'honest' and 'natural' by its contemporaries (compared to the machine-made metal ornamentation of the Victorian period).³



View to north elevation and northwest corner of front verandah

¹ In Australia, a gambrel roof is generally defined as a hip with small gablets under the ridge.

² '38 Quinn Street, Heidelberg', realestate.com, August 2020, <www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-heidelberg-133378322>

³ Richard Apperly, Robert Irving and Peter Reynolds, *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*, Angus & Robertson, 1994, pp144-8

History

Context

The City of Banyule covers the unceded Country of the Wurundjeri-willam people, who have inhabited and managed its landscape for thousands of generations and maintain an ongoing cultural connection.⁴ The lightly wooded grasslands of what became known as 'Ivanhoe' were quickly targeted for sheep runs and by timber-cutters from the 'illegal squatter camp' downstream the *Birrarung*/Yarra at Melbourne (est. 1835).⁵ However, as part of the 'Heidelberg' district in the Parish of Keelbundora, this area passed rapidly into private hands via auction in Sydney Town in 1838.⁶

Over the following decade, a patchwork of 'prestige' estates emerged, along with a surveyed township – *Warringal* (possibly 'eagle's nest'), later 'Heidelberg' – on the river's west bank.⁷ Productive river flats, and the demands of the gold diggings further afield, encouraged market gardening, orchards and (gradually, due to soil exhaustion and flooding) dairying. Activities all mostly undertaken by tenant farmers.⁸ This perceived rural idyll enticed *plein air* artists to the district during the 1880s, fixing the 'Heidelberg School' within Australia's artistic consciousness.⁹

Intensive residential development was curbed by poor communications with Melbourne until 1901, when an improved railway line was laid, initiating 'four decades of slow and relatively affluent suburban sprawl', predominantly in and around the Heidelberg township as well as Eaglemont and Ivanhoe train stations.¹⁰ The broader locality of Heidelberg underwent a postwar development as tracts of pastoral land in its western reaches were transformed into mostly low-scale public housing estates. Heidelberg West, notably, also accommodated the Olympic Village (an Australian innovation) for the 1956 games (some 841 individual dwellings).¹¹ Throughout, the established environs of Heidelberg – undulating and river-orientated – consolidated as a middle-class area, characterised by single-family, detached housing.



View of semi-rural Rosanna, circa 1914
(Source: Cyril Cummins, *A pictorial history of Heidelberg Since 1836*, Heidelberg Historical Society, 1982, p71)

⁴ Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018, pp15-20, available online

⁵ James Boyce, 1835: *The Founding of Melbourne & The Conquest of Australia*, Black Inc., 2011, pxi

⁶ Keelbundora stems from a European rendering of Kulbundora – the name of the eldest son of the important Wurundjeri *ngurungaeta* (essentially 'head man') Billibellary. ('Suburban Native Names', *Argus* 28 April 1906, p5). One of the earliest manifestations of local governance in the Port Phillip District (1840), the fluctuating borders of municipal Heidelberg mirrored its growth, as it was reformatting into a Road District (1860), Shire (1871) and then City (1934). It was amalgamated as the City of Banyule in 1994.

⁷ Donald S Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, Melbourne University Press, 1972, p13

⁸ Robert P Whitworth, *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer*, F F Bailliere, 1879, pp237

⁹ Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.5, and 2.3.10; and Janine Rizzetti, 'Heidelberg', in Richard Broome et al, eds., *Remembering Melbourne 1850-1960*, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, 2016, p282

¹⁰ Don Garden, 'Heidelberg', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, July 2008, available online

¹¹ Geoffrey Ballard, 'Olympic Village', *eMelbourne*, School of Historical & Philosophical Studies, The University of Melbourne, 2008, available online

Site-specific

The subject land formed part of Crown Portion 5 in the Parish of Keelbundora. This roughly 388-hectare holding was purchased by the wealthy investor James Watson, of the pastoral company Watson & Hunter, in 1840. The delayed sale, relative to other Crown transactions in Heidelberg, was reputedly due to the holding's poor agricultural prospects, particularly lack of water access. However, noting its proximity to the nascent *Warringal* (Heidelberg) township, Watson proceeded to subdivide and sell his acquisition within weeks of purchase, advertising it as the 'Rosanna Estate'.¹² It appears that these early land dealings were confused and may not have been official. As the colonial economy slackened over the early 1840s, the majority of these purchases reverted back to Watson & Hunter. When this company had declared insolvency in 1843, the Rosanna Estate – after much legal wrangling – was transferred to James Brown (d. 1849), who leased it to multiple small-scale tenant farmers.¹³

The Brown family retained ownership of the majority of Portion 5 into the late 1870s when notices announcing its breakup began to appear:

The Rosanna Estate, Heidelberg, comprising 870 acres [*note this figure varies*] of valuable freehold land, suitable for agricultural, dairy farm, and other purposes, delightfully situated in one of our most rapidly increasing suburbs. It is at present distant only eight miles, but will doubtless be very shortly brought within railway connexion with the metropolis, whereby its value must be immensely increased.¹⁴

By November 1881, the Rosanna Estate had been acquired by the Heidelberg Land Company, formed by Matthew Henry Davies and Charles Henry James, both later infamous 'land boomers' who owned vast tracts of land across Melbourne. James consolidated ownership of the estate, which had been 'land banked', around 1885.¹⁵ He initially campaigned for a private railway between Heidelberg and Eltham to run through this holding. When that fell through, James then backed the government line to nearby Heidelberg (est. 1888). Yet the sharp economic downturn of the early 1890s curtailed any wholesale speculative intentions for the Rosanna Estate. By 1897, it had passed into the hands of the liquidators.¹⁶

The subject allotment formed part of an approximately 4.5-hectare rectangular parcel that had been excised from the Rosanna Estate in 1889, just before the commencement of James' spectacular crash. Although its buyer, John Marshall, a Collins Street-based 'merchant'. He also appears to have fared poorly during the collapse of the Melbourne property/development market. Marshall's Heidelberg property was foreclosed and transferred to the mortgagee, Thomas Wilson of Brighton, in 1892.¹⁷

Some years later, between 1905 and 1906, the subject building was constructed to the southern reaches of the large property – still owned by Wilson – seemingly as a home for the newlyweds Edward Charles Rouch and Alice Maud (*née* Hughes).¹⁸ Edward, then a clerk, was first recorded residing in Rosanna Road (the property's original address) in the 1906 electoral roll, having the previous year resided elsewhere in the locality.¹⁹ The 1910 edition of the *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria* provided the name 'Graceburn' to the Rouch's residence.²⁰

It seems likely that *Graceburn* had been built by Edward's father, Charles Rouch, a well-known local contractor and owner/operator of a major timber mill in Heidelberg.

In August 1914, ownership of the property was conveyed from Wilson to Alice Rouch, presumably via sale.²¹ Just prior to the purchase, Edward and Alice appear to have moved to nearby Cartmell Street for about a year before returning to *Graceburn*, where they remained into the 1950s.²²

¹² Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, pp21-2, 43

¹³ Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, p93

¹⁴ 'Preliminary Notice', *Argus*, 10 June 1879, p2

¹⁵ Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, pp139-41

¹⁶ Garden, *Heidelberg: The Land and Its People 1838-1900*, p181

¹⁷ Certificates of Title, vol 2207, folio 221; and vol 2452, folio 347

¹⁸ Ancestry.com.au

¹⁹ *Australian Electoral Roll*, Division of Bourke, 1905 (p12) and 1906 (p8)

²⁰ Listings for the east side of Rosanna Road, between Brown Street and Plenty Road, first appear in the 1906 *Sands Directory*. In the 1910 edition, seven occupants are identified in this stretch. The *Directory* was not produced in 1908 and 1909. Research undertaken during this study has routinely demonstrated extensive lag time between known occupancy/construction changes and the *Directory*. It is possible that more expedient information gathering techniques were excised in then largely rural Heidelberg than more established urban or suburban areas.

²¹ Certificate of Title, volume 2452, folio 347

²² Certificate of Title, volume 2452, folio 347; and *Sands & McDougall's Directory of Victoria* editions for 1914, 1915, 1916

A 1945 aerial photograph of *Graceburn* shows a curved tree-lined driveway leading from Rosanna Road to the northern elevation of the sizable residence within a fenced/hedged yard. Immediately south appears to be an orchard. The remainder of the property is comprised of a paddock dotted with a few trees. While well set back from Rosanna Road, *Graceburn's* elevated position on the high side would have made it a prominent built feature from this key local artery.



1945 aerial photograph of *Graceburn*, its then boundaries approximately outlined in dashed red
The house and its immediate garden setting is circled in dashed yellow
(Source: Landata, Project no 5, Run 31, Frame 60256)

Following Alice's death in December 1954, her will granted *Graceburn* to her children Alan Edward Charles Rouch and Eileen Ruth Hoban.²³ This transfer, along with the encroaching urban footprint of Heidelberg, seems to have triggered considerations of subdivision.

In March 1956, after weeks of advertisements, the subdivisational sale of the long-held 'Graceburn Estate' was held. Seven sites for shops and 59 residential allotments, fronting Rosanna Road and newly created streets (St James Road, Quinn Street, Hodgson Street), were offered:

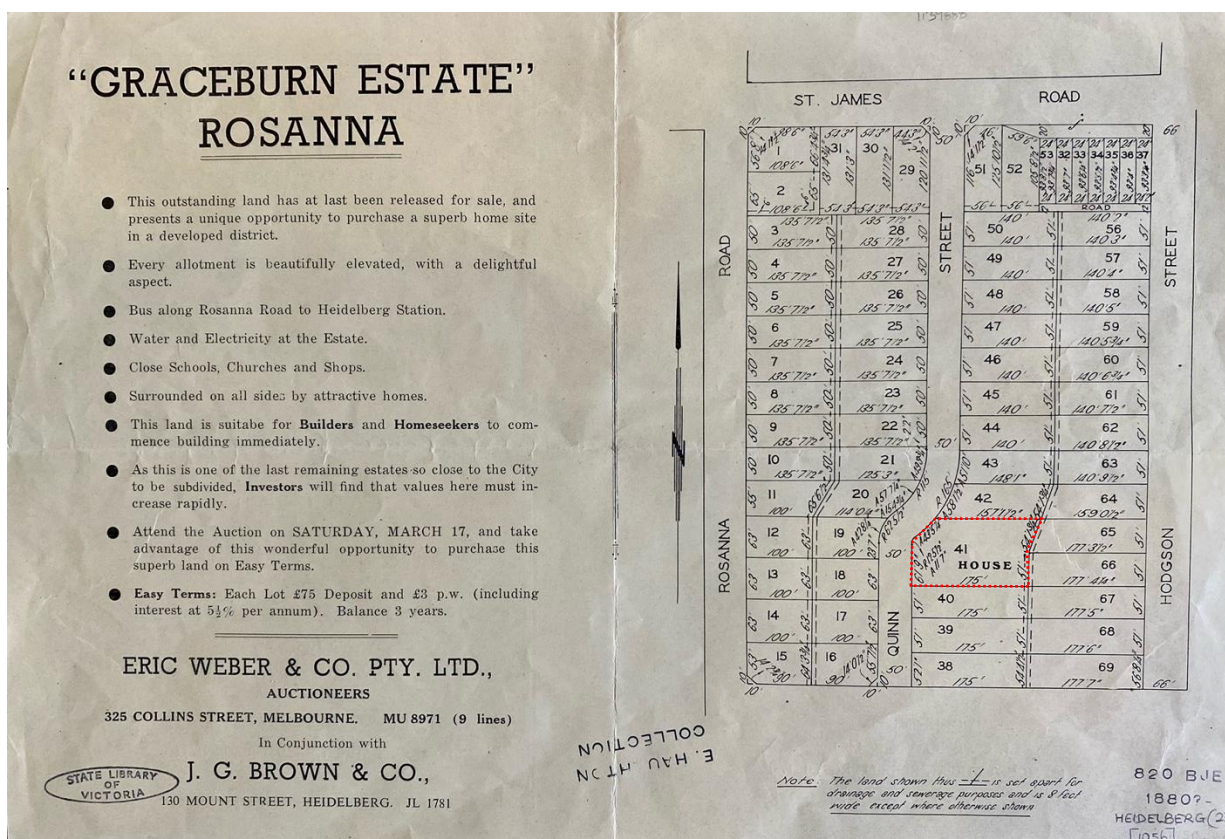
Every allotment in elevated position, with delightful aspect. Bus along Rosanna Road. Water and electricity at the estate; close schools, churches and shops. This is the most outstanding land available in the district and is surrounded on all sides by attractive homes.²⁴

Over 1,000 people flocked to the on-site auction, during which all the lots were sold for a combined total of £69,700.²⁵

²³ Certificate of Title, volume 4926, folio 169; Edward Charles Rouch died ten years after his wife in 1964.

²⁴ *Argus*, 17 March 1956, p25

²⁵ *Argus*, 19 March 1956, p7

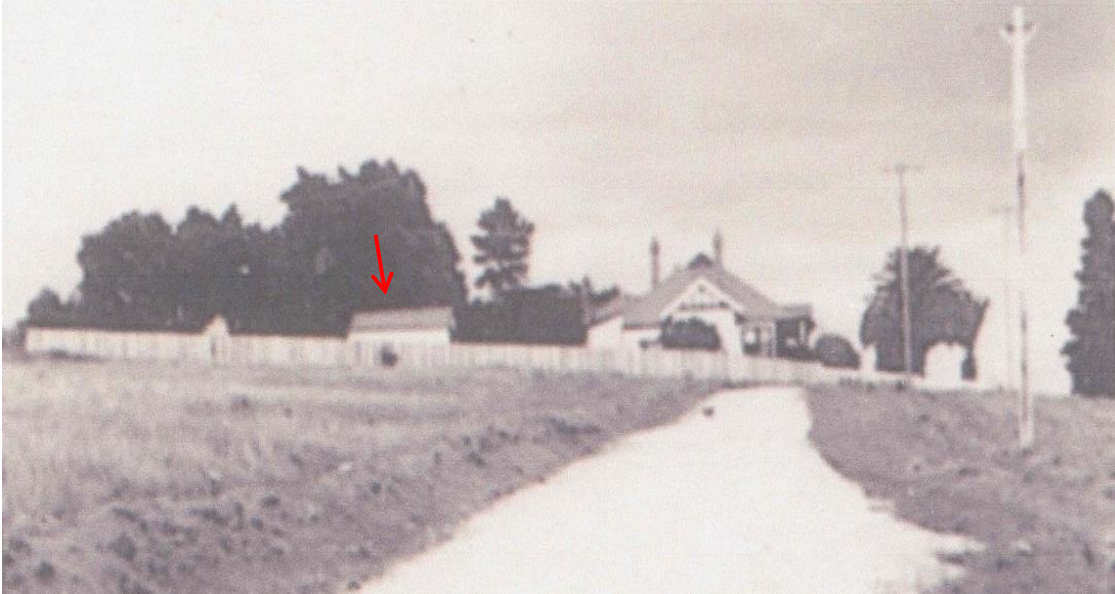


Promotional auction map of the subdivision with the existing subject allotment (no 41) with house outlined in dashed red (Source: *Graceburn Estate, Rosanna*, 1956, SLV, MAPS 820 BJE 1880?)

Graceburn, specified as containing seven rooms, was also sold at this time for £5,000, retaining an allotment about twice the size as the others in the subdivision.²⁶ As part of the subdivision, Quinn Street was provided with a bend at the subject property, seemingly to provide additional opportunities for viewing the residence from the public realm. Photographs of *Graceburn* taken around its 1957 sale, possibly for promotional purposes, are reproduced below. These show a front garden planted with ornamental palms and bushes surrounded by a post and rail fence. None of these elements remain. The residence has a light colour scheme with window frames and timber battening to the gable end picked out in a dark shade.



Graceburn, viewed from the Quinn Street, circa 1957 (Source: courtesy of Heidelberg Historical Society)



Graceburn, view from the north along Quinn Street, circa 1957

The outbuilding (red arrow) may be the extant timber garage in its original position
(Source: courtesy of Heidelberg Historical Society)



Graceburn, north-west corner, circa 1957

Note two chimneys on north side, since removed, and likely original colour scheme
(Source: Heidelberg Historical Society)

Ownership was formally transferred to the new owners in 1957, who occupied the property for over 50 years.²⁷ During their tenure, the front and rear garden's existing landscape character was cultivated, and tennis court provided. The existing garage, which dates from at least the 1950s, was also relocated to its current position.²⁸

²⁷ Certificate of Title, vol 4926, folio 169

²⁸ Correspondence from owners to Banyule City Council, dated 4 November 2010

Rouch family

The close association of the Rouchs with Heidelberg commenced in 1890 when the Collingwood-born Charles Rouch – an experienced builder, then in his early forties – became foreman at a steam sawmill and timber yard in Burgundy Street. Nine years later, he purchased the mill, founding Charles Rouch Pty Ltd. The business was flourished, its sawn timber providing the raw material for an expanding Melbourne. Additional premises were established in Peel Street, West Melbourne, and the business became one of the largest importers of timber in Victoria.²⁹ His son, Edward Rouch of *Graceburn*, was also involved in the business, continuing it after Charles death.³⁰ The sharp sound of the steam whistle from Roch's complex, which closed in 1964, and its tall industrial brick chimney (demolished in 1972), are still well-remembered locally.³¹



1920s photograph, from the corner of Lower Heidelberg Road and Burgundy Street
The Rouch's chimney dominates the skyline
(Source: Picture Victoria, ID 7381)

Thematic Context

Context, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History*, October 2018:

- Theme 5: Suburban development

See also Allom Lovell & Associates, *Banyule Heritage Place Study: An Urban History*, vol 1, July 1999:

- 6.3 Residential development 1900-1940s

Comparative Analysis

There are few timber residences included in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay for Banyule that date from the Federation period, particularly those of a grander type like *Graceburn*. In general, the transitional Federation Bungalow idiom, either in timber or brick, is less frequently seen in the municipality. The Queen Anne style is far more prevalent, albeit largely constructed of red brick. In Eaglemont, the three picturesque timber/roughcast residences from the early 1900s known as the 'Chadwick

²⁹ 'Mr. Charles Rouch', *Argus*, 12 September 1934, p6

³⁰ *Argus*, 4 October 1934, p16; and *Argus*, 11 February 1939, p2

³¹ Discussion with the Heidelberg Historical Society

Houses' by the inventive architect Harold Desbrowe-Annear are singular in design, reflecting the marked fusion of design sources and reformulation occurring in the Federation period.³²

The main comparable Federation Bungalow timber house affected by a HO in Banyule is *Mollison Lodge* at 32 Old Lower Plenty Road, Viewbank (HO47). It was built after *Graceburn*, in circa 1915, on a large holding (since truncated) and exhibits a more standard array of attributes associated with the style, such as a simplified form and dominant slate-clad hipped roof that incorporates a wrap-around verandah (turned timber posts). *Mollison Lodge* is more reflective of its more unassuming role as the primary residence of a working property. *Graceburn*, while also initially set within a semi-rural setting, was positioned on a key route outside the township of Heidelberg and accommodated the locally well-known and socially respectable Rouch family, factors that likely compelled its more architecturally considered composition.

Other broadly comparable timber residences in Banyule affected by a HO include:

- 3 St Helena Road, Greensborough (HO143) – an elongated gabled roof 'homestead' constructed in the 1890s with an elevated hillside sitting. It has a return verandah embellished with Queen Anne fretwork and a projecting rotunda-shaped feature on the corner. The residence has been altered, but the extent to which is unclear.
- 137 Waterdale Road, Ivanhoe (HO156) – a modest timber villa, built about 1905. Its hip roof, bracketed eaves, bullnose verandah roof and mixture of timber and cast-iron decoration make it a good example of a transitional Victorian/Federation design.
- 2 Rockbeare Grove, Ivanhoe (HO114) – a later example of an eclectic timber residence, built 1915. It displays the simplified bungalow roof form but is embellished with common Federation detailing and incorporates at the corner a square, hipped-roof 'tower' (timber/roughcast).

This Study has also recommended another timber residence for a HO – *Royd* at 61-63 Mount Street, Eaglemont. It is of commensurate size with *Graceburn* but had been constructed several years earlier (1901). While it also has a broad frontage, original gambrel roof (altered), prominent return verandah and similarly restrained detailing, *Royd* is more expressive of the Queen Anne design mode.

Overall, *Graceburn* presents as the principal timber instance of the Federation Bungalow style in Banyule.

Intactness

Largely intact

Previous Assessment

- Context Pty Ltd, *Banyule Heritage Review*, prepared for the City of Banyule, 13 March 2012 – 'Places recommended for a future HO'
- RBA Architects + Conservation Consultants, *Banyule Heritage Study 2020: Stage 1 report*, Banyule City Council, August 2020 – High priority, recommended for Stage 2

Heritage Overlay Schedule Controls

External Paint Controls	Yes (timber elements)
Internal Alteration Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and/or fences	No

³² 38 The Eyrie, Eaglemont (HO67 + VHR H1009); 55 Outlook Drive, Eaglemont (HO48 + VHR H2082); and 32-34 The Eyrie, Eaglemont (HO66 + VHR H1156). See also 234 Rosanna Road, Rosanna (HO55) and *East View*, 16 Martin Street, Heidelberg (VHR H1033 + HO43) and all the *Former Heidelberg Shire Offices and Library* (HO171), all designs by Annear.

Extent of Heritage Overlay

The proposed extent of the heritage overlay is outlined approximately below.



Recommended extent of heritage overlay
(Source: Nearmap, November 2020)