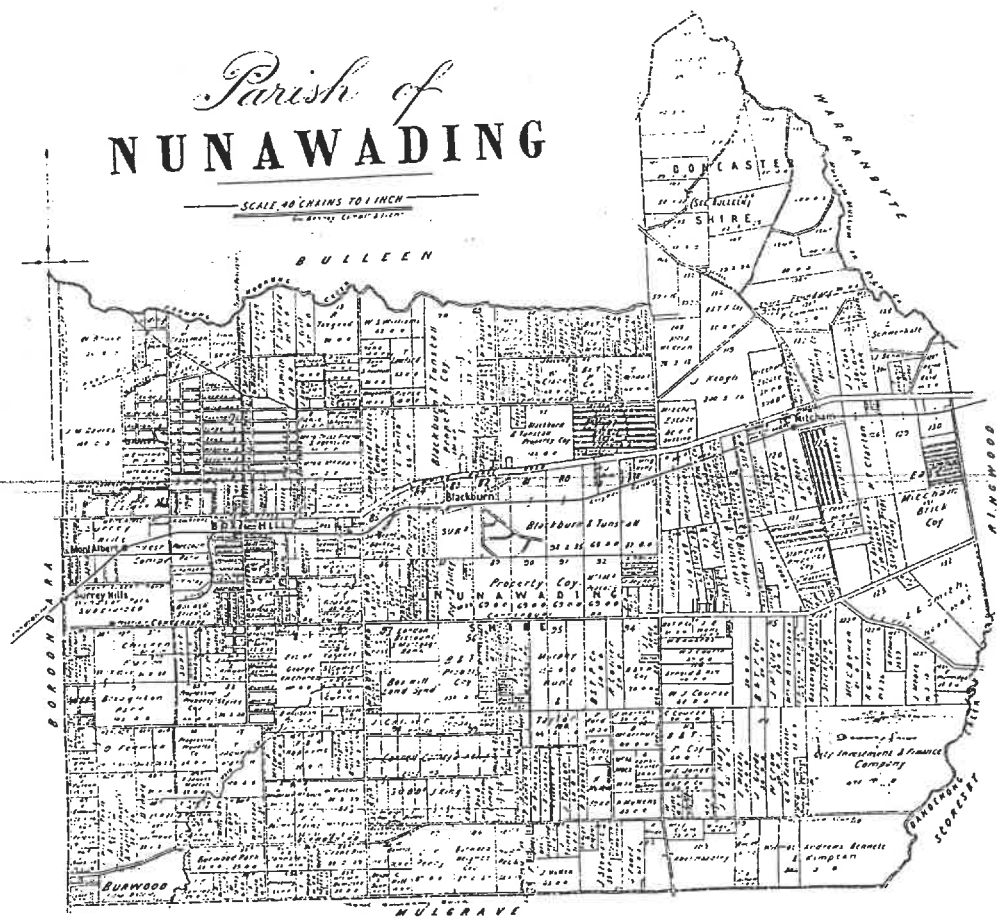# CITY OF WHITEHORSE
HERITAGE REVIEW

THEMATIC HISTORY

VOLUME 1

CITY OF

WHITEHORSE

CITY OF WHITEHORSE HERITAGE REVIEW

THEMATIC HISTORY

VOLUME 1

This report is Volume 1 of a set, comprising:

Volume 1	**Thematic History**
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Cr Kaele Way	*Councillor, Blackwood Ward, City of Whitehorse*
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Nunawading Historical Society

Box Hill Historical Society

1.0   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Location and Boundaries

The City of Whitehorse, 64.3 square kilometres in area, is located approximately 15 kilometres due east of the city. The boundaries of the municipality are broadly defined by Warrigal Road in the west, the Koonung and Mullum Mullum Creeks in the north, Heatherdale Road and Dandenong Creek in the east, and Highbury Road in the south. The City of Whitehorse takes in the former cities of Box Hill and Nunawading and is bounded by the municipalities of Manningham, Maroondah, Knox, Monash and Boroondara.

The municipality contains the suburbs of (from west to east, grouped by postcode boundary) Surrey Hills and Mont Albert; Box Hill North; Box Hill and Box Hill South; Burwood, East Burwood, Blackburn, Blackburn North and Blackburn South; Nunawading and Forest Hill; Vermont and Vermont South; and Mitcham. Approximately half of Surrey Hills and Burwood, and a very small portion of Box Hill North fall outside Whitehorse. Very small portions of Nunawading and Mitcham fall within the City of Manningham.
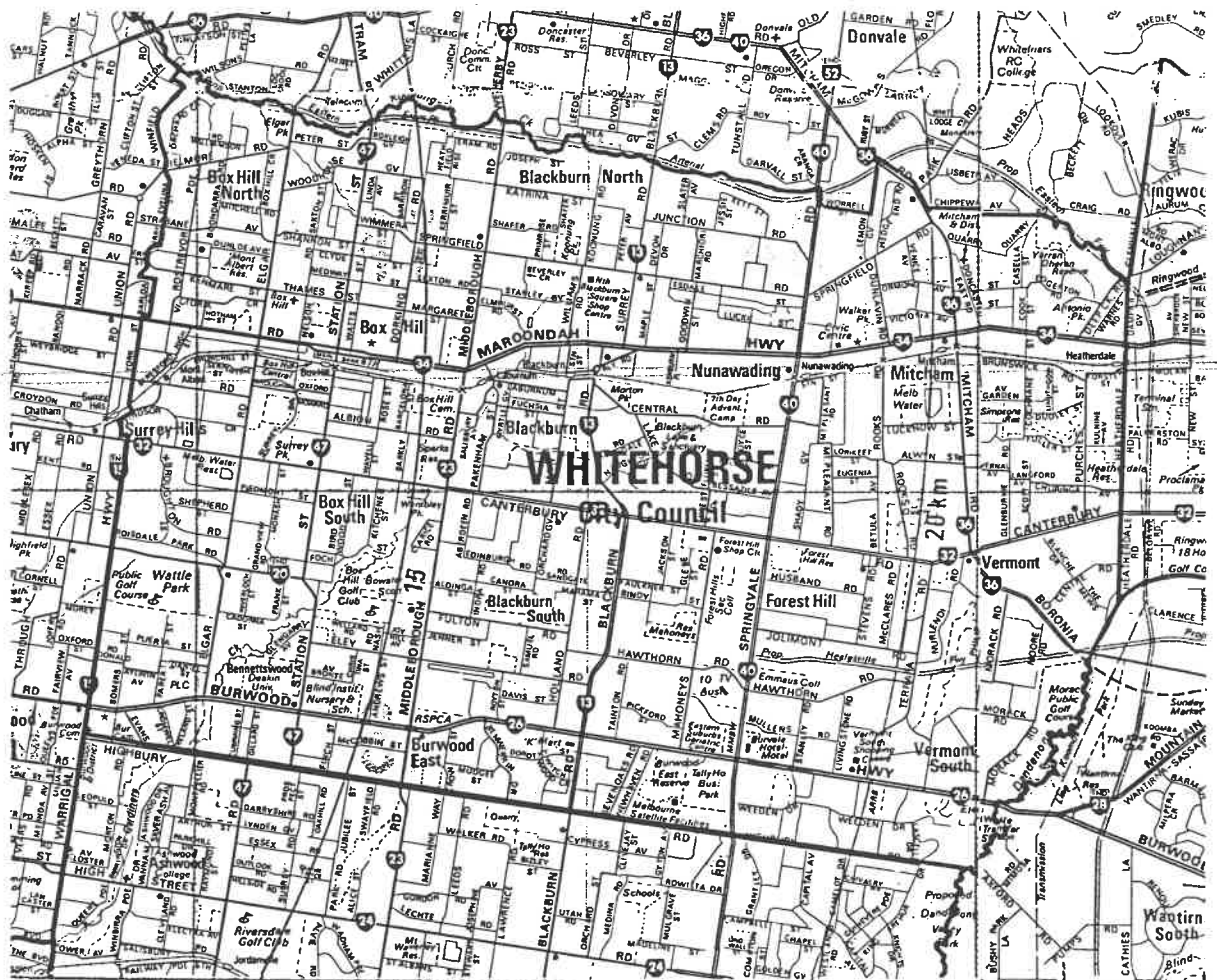

Figure 1   *City of Whitehorse*
              Source: *Melway Wall Map of Greater Melbourne* (Municipal Edition). 1995

1.2   Extent and Sources

This history attempts to describe broad patterns of development of the area now known as the City of Whitehorse since European settlement, and to illustrate the way in which these patterns are manifested in the urban character and heritage of the municipality.

Of the previous heritage studies, Andrew C Ward & Associates' *City of Box Hill Heritage and Conservation Study* (July 1990) included a general history component, and Context Pty Ltd's *City of Nunawading Heritage Awareness Study* (1994) included a thematically-arranged *Historical Geography Project*.

Of the other secondary sources, the two basic municipal histories are Diane Sydenham's *Windows on Nunawading* (1990) and Andrew Lemon's *Box Hill* (1978). Short histories of other suburbs include Tim Shambrook's *This Is Vermont* (1989) and Alyssa Clarkson's *Ballyshanassy: A History of the Burwood District* (1991). Other sources consulted include journal and newspaper articles, a number of short histories and conservation studies of individual properties, and files held by local historical societies, the National Trust and Heritage Victoria.

1.3   Geology and Physical Geography

Geologically, the area now within the City of Whitehorse was largely formed during the Middle Silurian period (400 million years ago), and comprises part of the Anderson Creek formation of "massive siltstones, interbedded with thin sandstones" with "occasional bunches of massive, laminated and current bedded greywackes, conglomerates and clast beds". The municipality's watercourses generally date from the Quaternary (recent to Pleistocene) period (the last 2 million years), while parts of the south-west of the municipality comprise Red Bluff Sands, "fine to coarse sands, with minor poorly sorted gravels, poorly consolidated", also dating from the Tertiary period. A small area in Box Hill North comprises part of the Dargile formation of "laminated and current bedded sandstones, interbedded with massive siltstones and shales", dating from the Silurian period.[1]

The gently undulating land ranges from approximately 60 to 120 metres above sea level.

1.4   Chronology of Events

1840	Parish of Nunawading named by Robert Hoddle
1851	Colony of Victoria established
1852	Survey of Nunawading Area
1854	Nunawading Parish first counted in Census
1857	Nunawading District Road Board established
1861	Harkaway (later Nunawading Common School) established
1872	Shire of Nunawading established
1882	Railway extended from Camberwell to Lilydale
1894	Water supply reaches the municipality
1925	Severance of Shire of Nunawading: creation of Shire of Blackburn and Mitcham and Borough of Box Hill
1927	Borough of Box Hill becomes City of Box Hill
1935	Box Hill Town Hall opened
1945	Shire of Blackburn and Mitcham becomes City of Nunawading
1968	Nunawading Civic Centre opened
1994	City of Whitehorse established

2.0 LAND SALES, SUBDIVISION AND HOUSING

2.1 First European Settlement

Box Hill's first landholder was a London-born Tasmanian, Arundel Wrighte. Since the late 1830s, he had occupied the Government Paddock on the banks of the Koonung Creek, running upwards of 600 sheep which he had brought with him across Bass Strait. After several moves, Wrighte and his wife settled on the banks of Bushy Creek, in what is now Box Hill North.[2] Another early settler was Thomas Toogood, who had established a dairy on the Koonung Koonung Creek to the north-west of Wrighte's farm, from as early as 1840. Gardiner's Creek, predictably, was another preferred site for settlement in the 1840s. Several settled along the creek during this time, including a Mr Eyton in Box Hill, James Farmer and James McAlpine in Box Hill South, and brothers George and William Bennett south of present-day Burwood Road.
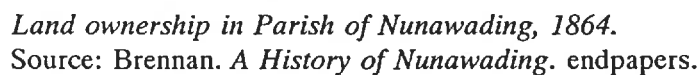
2.2 The First Surveys

In 1840 the Colonial Office in England extended to Port Phillip the system of 'Special Survey', which had been in place in South Australia for two or three years. To encourage immigration, wealthy capitalists could purchase a block of 5,120 acres (2,112 hectares) from England, for £1 an acre. The surveyed land had to be at least five miles from Melbourne, and the Crown reserved a right to run a road through it. In the Parish of Nunawading, Henry Elgar authorised a special survey by draftsman Thomas Nutt. Elgar selected the area approximately bounded by Burke, Canterbury and Elgar Roads, and the Koonung Creek.[3] In the ensuing years, Elgar's land largely ended up in the hands of his associates, as the result of his financial crises.[4]

Clement Hodgkinson was responsible for the survey of the parish prior to the establishment of the Nunawading District Road Board in 1857, as part of Hodgkinson's favoured 'survey before selection' policy, which was supposed to ensure a fairer distribution of potentially valuable agricultural land amongst would-be settlers, although this requirement was eventually abandoned in favour of a more liberal selection policy.[5] The assistant surveyor, H Permein, noted that the area was "not of much value for agricultural purposes", despite the relatively hilly topography and a number of watercourses, including Koonung Koonung (now Koonung) and Gardiner's Creeks. The area was described as covered by "heavy forest throughout of stringybark, box gum etc.".[6]

The land acquired by Elgar in his Special Survey was soon subdivided and sold in advance of the Crown land sales. The initial buyers of the land, which Elgar had never visited, were A Dyce, R Town, J Campbell, R Campbell, J Dacre (Elgar's agent), W G McCarthy, R Brooks and H Sea.

2.3 Government Land Sales

The first sale of freehold land in the Parish of Nunawading took place in 1850, when a series of large lots along the boundary of Elgar's Survey were offered for sale.[7] It was not a resounding success, although several early settlers, including Arundel Wrighte and the Bennet brothers, were able to purchase the land that they had previously leased. Later that year, further portions of Box Hill North were surveyed, and were sold at the next sale in 1851. During 1852, the remaining parts of present-day Box Hill were surveyed. These blocks were smaller than those in the earlier surveys, ranging from nineteen to forty-five acres. Land sales were held again in late 1853 and early 1854, and virtually all of Box Hill south of Whitehorse road was sold at these two sales.[8]

Figure 2   Land ownership in Parish of Nunawading, 1864.
          Source: Brennan. *A History of Nunawading*. endpapers.

Until the late 1850s, the Nunawading area had only been surveyed as far as Hunt's Lane (now Springvale Road).[9] Most of the land north of Whitehorse Road had been purchased by Patrick Riley. In 1861, German immigrant August Schwerkolt purchased some of Riley's land on the banks of Deep Creek in Mitcham.[10] The discovery of gold in Warrandyte suddenly made land in the Nunawading area attractive, not least of all because the Grant Act allowed that land, up to eighty acres in area, could be selected within ten miles of a goldfield. Many took advantage of this, and eighty-acre blocks were soon taken up by Francis Ainger in Mitcham, John McClelland in Tunstall (now the suburb of Nunawading), and Abraham Rooks in Forest Hill.[11] The latter area was then known as Scotsmans' Hill, after its early Scottish settlers like David Boyle, who had purchased land there in 1862.

In East Burwood and Vermont, land was sold in larger blocks, mostly about 200 acres. These were purchased by William Morton, Nelson Polak and others.[12] The most prominent landholder in this area was Dr L L Smith, who had purchased 119 acres off Canterbury Road in 1858, and a further 146 acres in the mid-1870s. He established an experimental farm, and although he never resided permanently on his property, he became well-known to the point that Vermont was known for many years as L L Vale.[13]

This pattern of early land ownership in the Parish of Nunawading—small blocks in Box Hill and Burwood, larger blocks in Blackburn, and the largest lots in Vermont, Burwood East and Mitcham—is clearly shown in a parish survey map from the early 1860s (Figure 2).

2.4 The Earliest Houses

According to the 1841 census, Thomas Toogood occupied a mud house on his land in Box Hill North.[14] Such crude houses, built of mud, timber or wattle-and-daub, would have been erected by many of the earliest settlers in Whitehorse. One of these, a mud house built by the Bennett brothers in Burwood, even survived until the 1950s.[15] The first substantial house was Arundel Wrighte's house, Beaudesert, a timber and stone dwelling which he had erected on his Box Hill North property by 1844.[16]
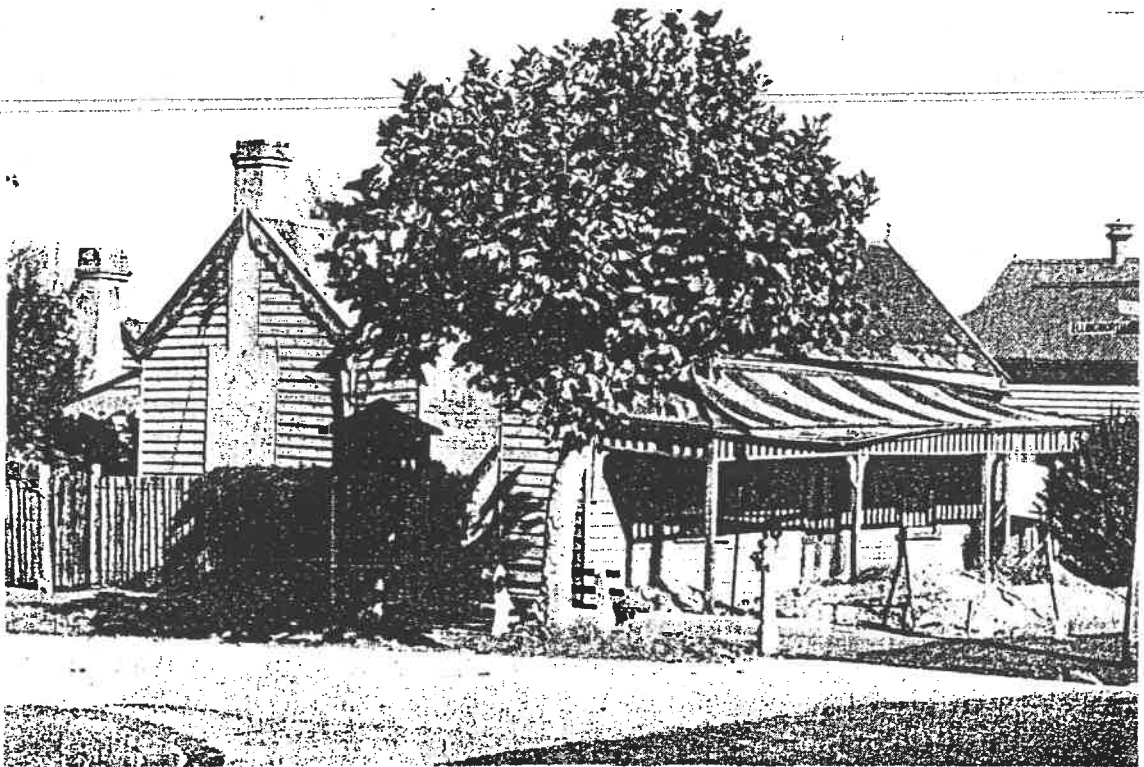
Figure 3   *Estate Agent William Ellingworth's House, shortly before its demolition, 1956.*
             Source: Lemon. *Box Hill.* p 19.

Others engaged in farming activity also erected permanent homesteads. Edward Crossman built his farmhouse in Box Hill North, as did Gad Eley in Burwood.[17] In the mid-1850s, George Blood and William Ellingworth both settled in central Box Hill, and built timber houses for themselves on opposite sides of Station Street.[18] The latter (Figure 3) was demolished in 1956, and the former survives in a much altered state. The earliest houses in the former municipality of Nunawading appeared in the early 1860s. Once again, they were mostly crude dwellings of mud, timber and wattle-and-daub. David Boyle built a wattle-and-daub house on his land at Forest Hill, and German immigrant August Schwerkolt built his first stone house in Mitcham.[19] John McClelland, one of Nunawading's earliest settlers, built a wattle-and-daub house on the south side of Whitehorse Road in 1869, and soon extended it into a substantial timber house which he named The Elms.[20] It was relocated to Springvale road in the 1940s, and has since been demolished.[21]

2.5 The Early Townships

The first township in the Parish of Nunawading was Burwood, then known as Ballyshanassy (Figure 4). Proclaimed in 1854, the village was bordered by present-day Gilmour Street, Burwood Highway, Highbury Road and Gardiner's Creek.[22] Ballyshanassy remained the only official township until 1861, when the Box Hill Township was proclaimed.[23] Also in 1861, land speculator Thomas Graham proposed the so-called Norwich Township, west of Dandenong Creek in present-day Vermont South.[24] His scheme envisaged vineyards along the river, and a market square with a rectilinear grid of streets. Graham had hoped that the proposed Lilydale railway line would pass through his new town. Unfortunately, it never did, and the Norwich Township subsequently failed. Traces of the original layout remain as present-day Morack and Terrara Roads. Several other townships were proposed in the Vermont, Tunstall and Mitcham areas under such names as Springfield, New Brunswick and Studley, and they were equally unsuccessful.[25]
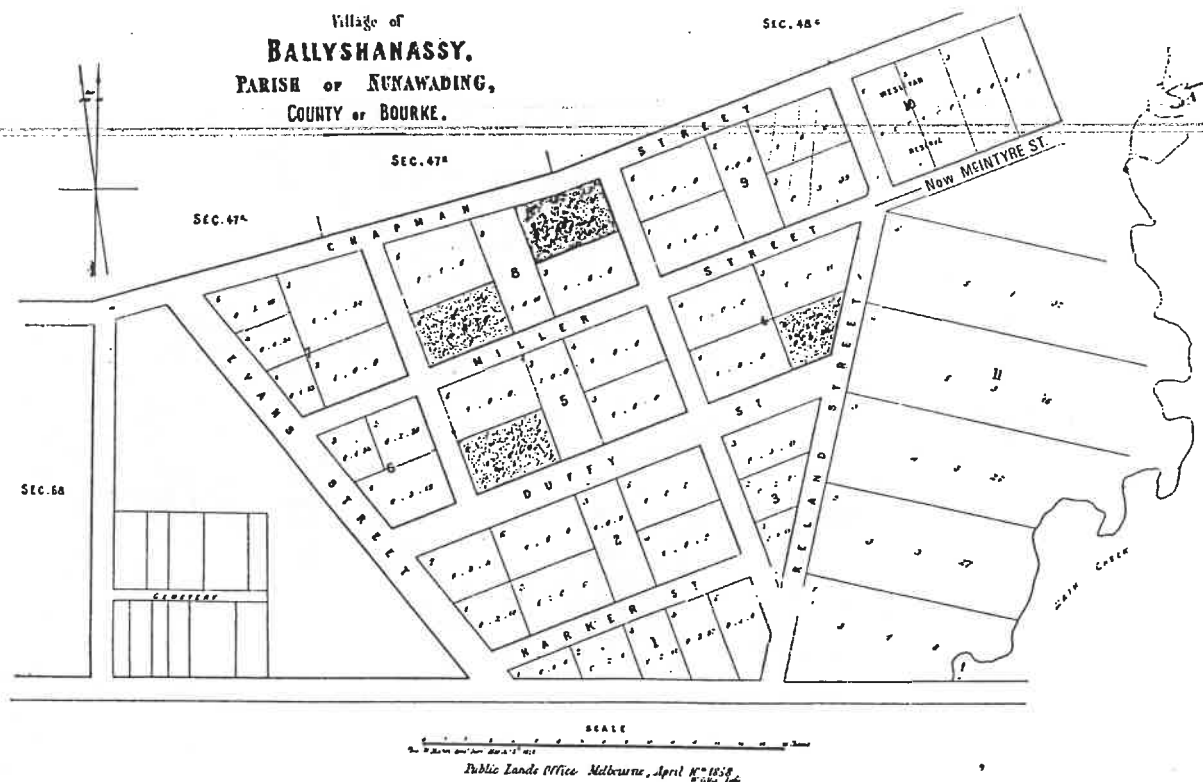
Figure 4   The Township of Ballyshanassy, 1858.
Source: Clarkson. Ballyshanassy. p 7.

2.6   The Land Boom

In 1882, the Camberwell railway line was extended to Lilydale, and the area of what is now Whitehorse suddenly became a prime target for large-scale land development. Subdivisions immediately sprung up around stations, including Elgar Park Estate in Surrey Hills (1882) and the Railway Station Estate in Box Hill (1883). The latter had been the property of long-time Box Hill resident George Sims, who made a considerable profit from the sale and subsequently built himself a large brick villa in Albion Road.[26] Another pioneer landholder, Arundel Wrighte, did not live to make a similar fortune. He and his wife both died in 1887, and their vast property was acquired by a concern calling itself the Box Hill Township Estate Company.[27] It was promptly subdivided, and it sold quickly over several months in 1888. Around this time, similar estates appeared throughout Box Hill (Figure 5), Surrey Hills, Mont Albert and, to a lesser extent, Box Hill South.[28]

Another group of developers, the Freehold Investment and Banking Company, purchased a thousand acres in Blackburn for a proposed estate. Streets were laid out, community facilities were established, and as a centrepiece, a watercourse was dammed to create Blackburn Lake.[29] The 138 lot subdivision, bordered by Central Road, Blackburn Road and Wellington Avenue, was declared in early 1889.[30] By that time, the secretary of the company, T R B Morton, had built several large houses in Gordon Crescent. But this was not enough to attract potential purchasers, and the company soon went into liquidation. Morton set up his own estate agency in Blackburn, but the remaining land took many years to sell.

Figure 5   Typical Land Boom Auction Advertisement, 1882.
Source: Ward. *City of Box Hill Heritage and Conservation Study.* p 46.
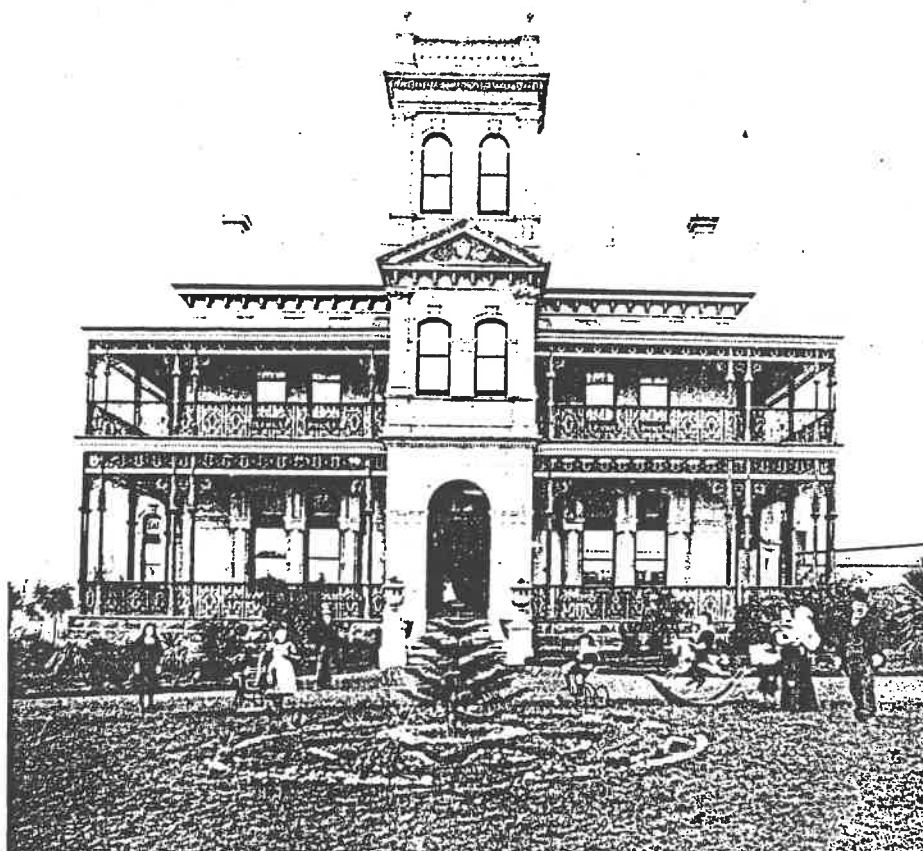
Figure 6   Upton House: built 1892, demolished c.1964.
Source: Findlay & Morgan. The Days Before Yesterday. *p 27.*

Developers were less keen to subdivide land further east, in the Tunstall and Mitcham areas, although a few did appear along the north side of Whitehorse Road. A wedge-shaped area of land, bordered by Mitcham and East Doncaster Road, was subdivided in 1889 as the 163-lot Mitcham Township Estate.[31] Between 1888 and 1890, land on the opposite side of Mitcham Road was subdivided in three stages.[32] A railway station opened at Tunstall (now Nunawading) in 1888, and the following year saw the subdivision of land on the corner of Whitehorse and Springvale roads.[33] All of these modest estates, like their huge counterpart in Blackburn, did not develop quickly. In more than a few instances, only one or two houses were built in an entire street before 1900.

The Land Boom had ended by the early 1890s, but not before a few so-called Boom mansions were erected, mostly in the central part of Box Hill. These included Banff and Turriff in Albion Street, and Tyneholm in Elgar Road. The finest example was Upton House in Thames Street, built in 1892 and demolished c.1964.[34]

2.7   Early Twentieth Century

In 1910, the Blackburn Township Estate was laid out around the railway station, to the immediate west of the Blackburn Model Town estate. Two years later, builder Algernon Elmore erected a timber bungalow for himself, Kyalite (Figure 7), in what is now Laburnum Street. Over the next decade, Elmore erected almost thirty similar houses in the immediate vicinity, which forms most of what is now known as the Bellbird Streets area.[35]
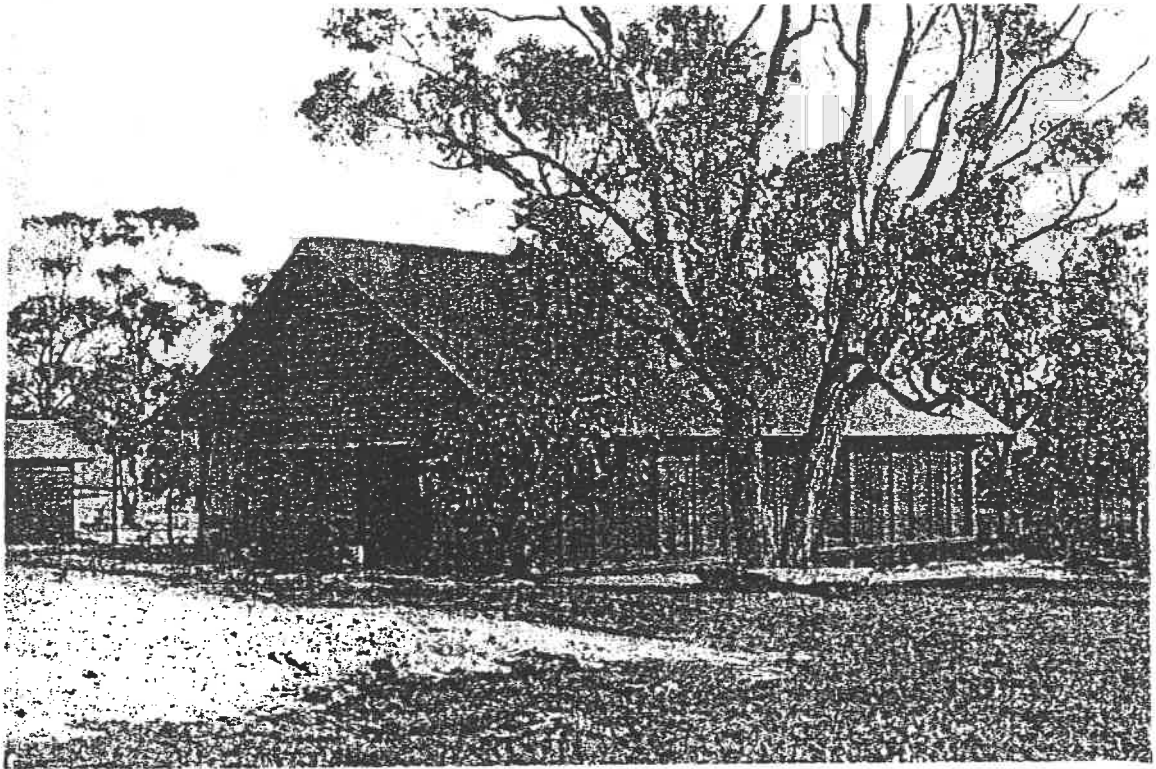
Figure 7   *Kyalite, Algernon Elmore's own house, Blackburn (c.1912)*
Source: *Home and Garden Beautiful.* 1 December 1914. p 831.

Just as the extension of the railway line promoted land development in the 1880s, the extension of tram lines promoted land development in the early twentieth century. The existing tram line was extended to Wattle Park in 1917, and then to Elgar Road in 1928. This gave rise to an influx of land subdivisions in the Burwood, Box Hill South and Surrey Hills areas. Several were named in honour of the new mode of transport in the area, including the Tramway Estate (1916) in Burwood and the Tram Terminus Estate (1936) in Box Hill South.[36]

In the 1910s and 1920s, much of the land in the Nunawading area remained rural. In 1911, an expanse of land between Springvale and Mitcham Roads was auctioned as nine huge lots, obviously intended for farming.[37] A residential estate was laid out in 1929 around Chippewa Avenue in the northernmost part of Mitcham, just outside the boundary of present-day Whitehorse. During the 1920s and 1930s, many of the failed Boom subdivisions were finally developed. To this day, there are entire streets of inter-War houses in Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham which reveal their nineteenth century origins with their grid layouts and rear lanes.

2.8   The Post-War Housing Boom

From the 1950s, the City of Nunawading underwent its most rapid period of residential development. In the context of the overall development of the municipality, the grand subdivisions of the 1880s cover a very small area set against the vast acreages which were transformed by building activity in the post-War period.

rural areas, which developed most rapidly in the post-War period, and the predominant theme of development in this period was the subdivision of former orchard and farming properties were into large residential estates, the names of many of which revealed their origins, such as the Cherry Orchard Estate (East Burwood, 1958) and the Boronia Farm Estate (Blackburn South, 1956).[38]

Suburban development of Blackburn, Nunawading and Mitcham stretched north towards Koonung Creek. South of the railway line, East Burwood expanded eastwards towards Vermont South. The 1970s and '80s saw the last rural frontiers of the municipality subdivided as housing pressed up against parklands on along the Mullum Mullum and Dandenong Creeks to the north and east. A small part of the municipality in which suburban development retained a somewhat rural feel was in Vermont and Vermont South , where land along Terrara, Moore and Morack Roads was carved up into huge blocks, usually exceeding an acre. In the 1950s and 1960s, many large houses were built on such blocks, often designed by noted contemporary architects.[39] Such houses existed side by side with the early farming homesteads which survived on greatly reduced blocks.

From the late 1980s, much new housing development has taken place on sites formerly occupied by schools, factories and welfare institutions. Examples are the former Vitclay site in Springfield Road, Blackburn North, now housing, the Tally Ho Boys' Training Farm, now housing, a retirement village and technology park, and numerous state schools which have been closed and demolished.

A minor theme in the history of the municipality was the building of public housing in Box Hill South in the immediate post-War period. In early 1947, the Victorian premier announced that the Housing Commission would acquire land for one thousand house sites in Box Hill South.[40] Despite industrial disputes, not to mention a change in government, the project went ahead, and the estate was laid out on the south-east corner of Elgar and Riversdale roads. By 1951, the Commission had erected over four hundred houses. A small amount of public housing has been erected in the municipality in the 1980s and '90s, but its extent has been limited. On a similar is smaller scale was the construction of a number of houses in Box Hill North for employees of Roger de Stoop's textiles factory, established on a 50-acre site on the Koonung Creek in 1950. The housing was part of a grand plan to build a 'model suburb' with recreational, educational and shopping facilities complementing the housing.[41]
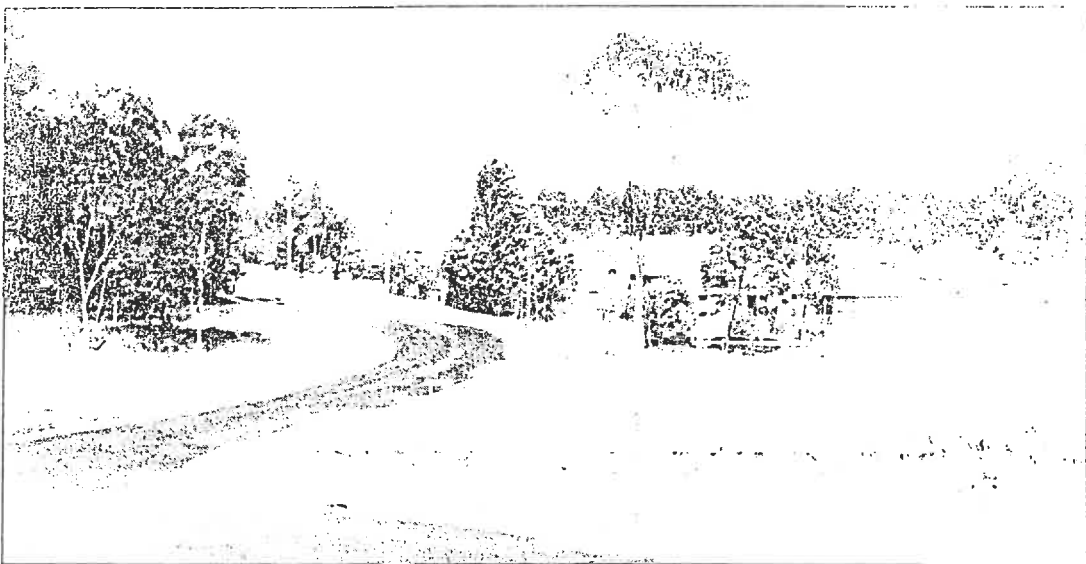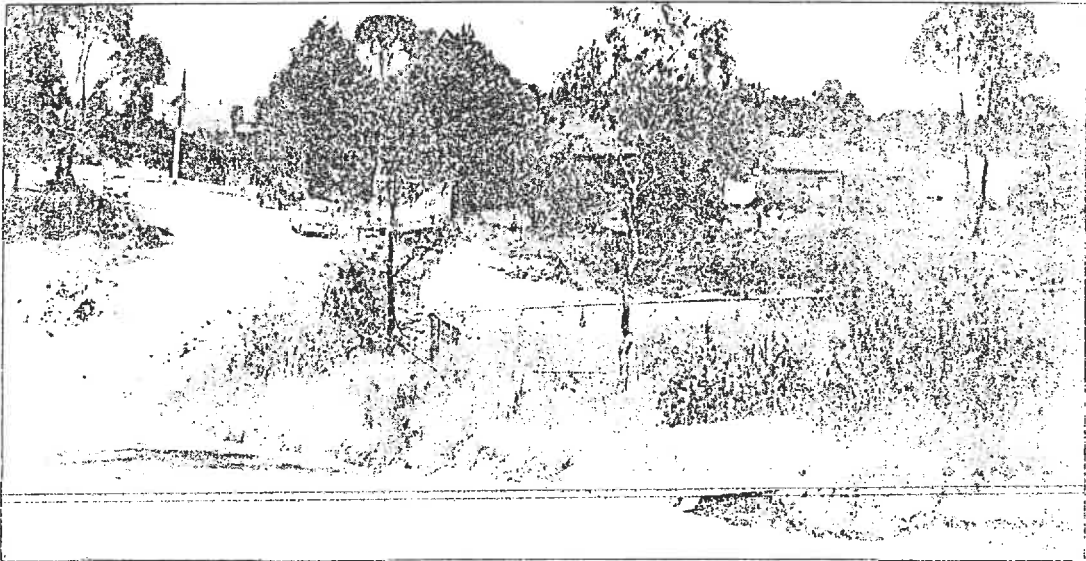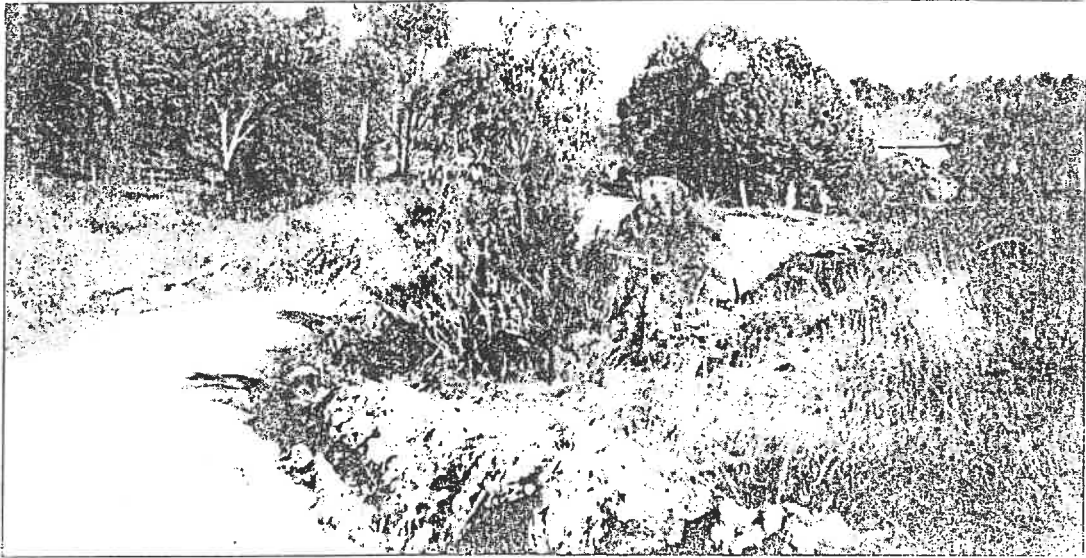
Figure 8   *Williams Road, Blackburn, through the Twentieth Century.*
Source: Sydenham. *Windows on Nunawading.* p 129.

3.0   BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

3.1   Primary Industry

Timber and Charcoal

Until the first Crown land sales of 1850, the area was known as a source of timber and charcoal. Timber-felling within five miles of the city was banned, so wood from outlying areas was in demand for fuel and building timber, and procurement of timber was only lightly regulated. Some wood-cutters also favoured burning wood to produce charcoal, which was then bagged and sold as fuel.[42] Even after several farms were established, the ongoing drought forced many farmers back into wood carting as a basic source of income.[43]

Agriculture

The earliest agricultural settlement began in the early 1850s. Early settlers in the area included the Schwerkolt family in Mitcham, who established a farm in the 1860s.[44] The census of 1861 revealed that in the Parish of Nunawading, agriculture was the main occupation.[45] The establishment of agriculture in the area was hampered by dry, often drought, conditions in the 1850s and 1860s; by 1862, the "less than ten percent of the land in the parish was under crop, and of this half was hay and a good proportion of the rest potatoes. There were thirteen acres of vineyard, 116 of market garden, and only thirteen acres of orchards".[46] Indeed, the oldest surviving Rate Books for Nunawading, compiled in 1863, confirmed the lack of success of many farmers. The 1863 Rate Books showed a small number of unusual small industries, including Pierce Boardmans' distillery, which produced eucalyptus, peppermint, caraway and melaleuca oils, and W H Slater's distillery which produced poppy and rose oils for perfumes.[47]

Figure 9   *Albers' Daffodil Farm, Burwood Road, now the site of Deakin University, c.1950s*
Source: *Finlay & Morgan*. Those Were The Days. p 19.

Before early settlers realised the potential of orchards, cattle and sheep grazing, dairying and crop growing dominated. In the 1860s there was a clear demographic bias towards young, male farmers and farm labourers, although few were particularly successful.[48] Despite this, promotion of the area for agriculture went ahead, led by Dr L L Smith, of Vermont, then known as L L Vale. Substantial agricultural infrastructure developed too. Henry Lloyd had owned abattoirs and a bull paddock adjacent to the gasworks on the corner of Elgar and Whitehorse Roads was closed in 1910, when a council-owned abattoir was opened in Woodhouse Grove, Box Hill North, where it existed until 1924.[49] T R B Morton opened a livestock market adjacent to the Box Hill railway station in July 1895, and this continued to operate as such until 1930.[50] The municipality even had its own Agricultural Show, organised by the Box Hill Progress Association and Doncaster Fruit-growers' Association at the market and adjoining Recreation Hall from 1901 until 1921.[51]

Horticulture

By the early 1860s, there was a major increase in land under cultivation, mostly due to orchards. Relatively smaller land holdings could generate much greater income than could grazing, and apple, plum and pear trees were seen to enhance the previously deforested landscape. Between 1871 and 1881, the area under orchards increased from 284 to 664 acres. These were generally concentrated in the northern parts of Box Hill and Blackburn.[52] By 1886, this figure had reached 100 acres, making it the Victorian Shire with the third largest acreage of orchards, surpassed only by Echuca and Bulleen.[53] The orchard boom of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was reflected in the construction of cool stores for fruit, built in Blackburn and Mitcham in the late 1910s.[54] The orchard industry was boosted by soldier settlement schemes in the district.[55]

Figure 10   *Talbett Orchard, Box Hill, 1880s*
Source: Lemon. *Box Hill.* p 77.

By the 1930s, several co-operative cool storage facilities were established. The most successful of these ventures was the Blue Moon Fruit Co-operative, formed in Blackburn in 1930, which grew into one of Australia's largest fruit exporters, opening other branches in Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia.[56] The orchard industry was immediately affected by the pressure of suburban development from the 1940s as orchards and farmlets were gradually subdivided. Market gardens co-existed with orchards, and from the early days vegetable growing was a common sideline for many farmers, although lack of transport to markets in Melbourne was a hindrance to success.[57] Flower growing was also prevalent in the area. The Adult Deaf and Dumb Society, which had established itself on a large site at Blackburn Lake in 1908, was one of several suppliers of cut flowers, including dahlias, gladioli and roses.[58] Other local families specialised in particular species: the Albers with daffodils in Burwood (Figure 9), and the Chandlers with Boronia in Blackburn South.[59]

3.2   Secondary Industry

Clay Industries

Although Andrew Lemon alludes to two early "manufacturies" in Nunawading, brickmaking was the first true industry to come to the area. The high quality clays in the area had been identified from as early as the 1850s, with a number of clay workers and potteries opening from the 1850s to the 1870s.[60]

The railway-led land boom of the 1880s prompted the expansion of the industry. In Box Hill, the Box Hill Brick Company established its works in Federation Street in 1884, and prospered until the depression hit in 1892, when the works was closed.[61] Other major brick, pipe and tile works of this period included the Blackburn Brickworks (established 1885, closed 1895) the Walker family's Australian Brick Pipe and Tessellated Tile Company in Mitcham (established 1886; Figure 11), making pipes and tiles, and the Geal Brothers works in Springvale Road, Forest Hill, making pots and pipes for orchardists from 1903.[62]

By the mid 1910s, the Box Hill Brickworks site had been re-established by the Standard Brickworks[63]; in 1916, brick and tilemaking had joined fruit growing as a leading industry in the area, and by the 1920s and 1930s, the municipality was known as Victoria's major tile-producing region. It was then that Wunderlich established its site in Vermont, Daniel Robertson Bros. their Tunstall brickworks, and Vitclay their complex at Blackburn North, which had been the site of a pottery operated by the White Brothers since the 1860s.[64]

The clay industries continued to thrive into the 1960s, but with changing technology and market demands most of the 'clay belt' sites gradually closed down: notable were the 1988 closure of one of Victoria's last operating Hoffman kilns at the Box Hill Brickworks complex and the 1992 closure of the Vitclay works.

Other Industry

Despite the continuing rural nature of the municipality into the early twentieth century, the commercial growth experienced by Box Hill, in particular, in the 1910s extended to industry, yet industrial development—with the exception of clay industries—has never been a major historical theme.

A small number of factories, including Harvey's agricultural implements foundry and Tully and Russell's motor spray works,[65] opened in Box Hill before World War I. Sewering of the municipality, which began in 1928, was another attractor for industry, but that growth which did occur in the 1930s was reversed or slowed by wartime shortages and demands in the 1940s.[66] Post-War industrial complexes established in the area included a large factory for Holeproof in Whitehorse Road, Box Hill, begun in 1948[67], the Turner Industries factory in Nunawading (designed by Grounds, Romberg and Boyd in 1957), and the Bowater Scott (now Carter Holt Harvey) complex in Box Hill South.

In general, though, industrial development in the region was more concentrated further to the south and east, in Bayswater and Dandenong. In spite of this Lemon notes that by 1978, there were 162 manufacturing establishments employing nearly 7,000 people in Box Hill alone.[68]
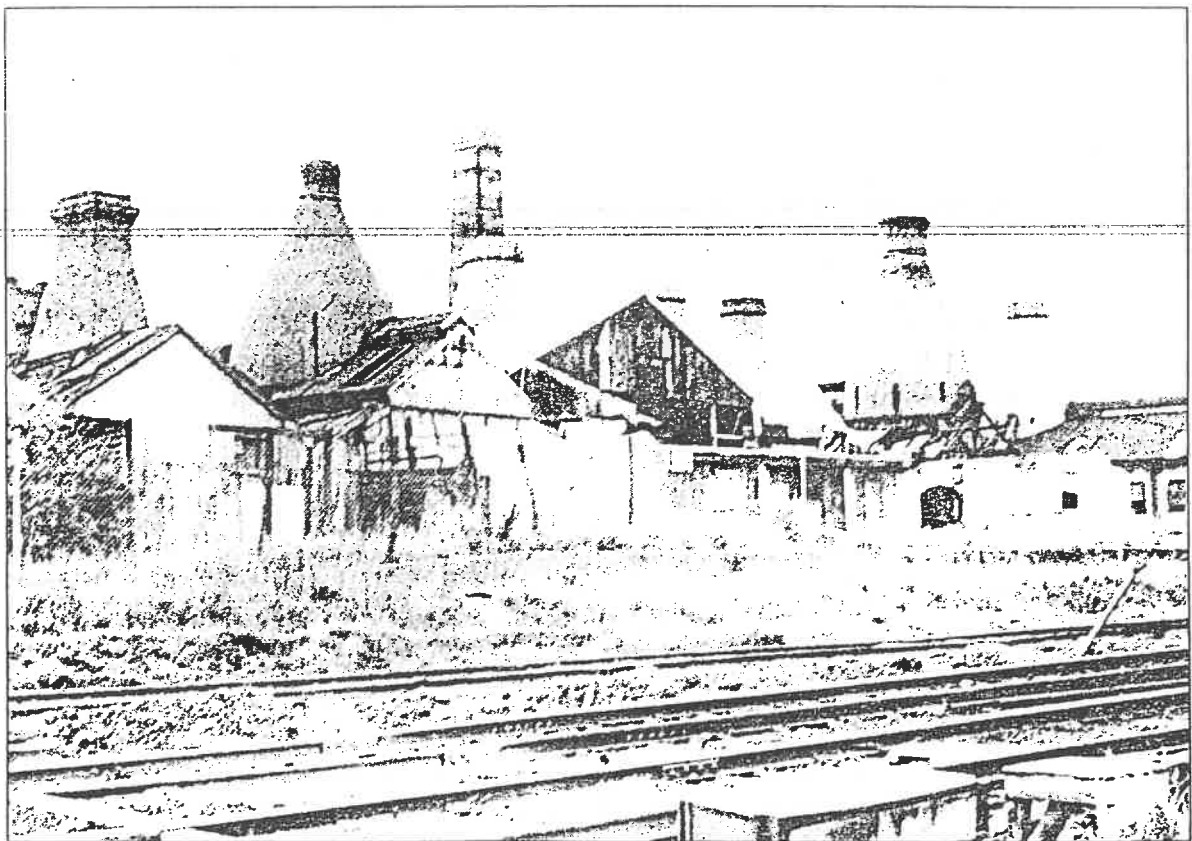
Figure 11   *Australian Tessellated Tile Company's Works, Mitcham*
Source: Sydenham. *Windows on Nunawading.* p 101.

Figure 12   *Silas Padgham's General Store and Post Office*
             Source: Finlay & Morgan. *The Days Before Yesterday.* p 1.

3.3   Retailing and Commerce

Retailing

The first shopping centre in the municipality was established along Whitehorse Road and Station Street, Box Hill. By 1876, businesses were being operated by blacksmith Robert Sutton, Silas Padgham (general store and post office), butcher George Cockroft and bootmaker John Ragg. There were also general stores run by Silas Padgham (Figure 12) and Alfred Serpell, and the Railway Hotel.[69] Further east, the small timber buildings housing general stores began to appear in the late 1870s: Blackburn's first shop was built around 1878[70], and Vermont's in 1881, despite seeds of the town of Norwich appearing in the 1860s.[71]

Although the municipality's only official government-surveyed township, Ballyshanassy, had existed since 1854, commercial development in Burwood favoured the Boroondara side of Warrigal Road, and only a few shops appeared on the Nunawading side in the 1800s. Walter Clarke, storekeeper, baker and postmaster in Ballyshanassy, also became a banker when the Post Office Savings Bank opened in his premises in April 1879.[72]

A 1905 photograph shows Box Hill's commercial centre to have developed substantially, with the modest timber single-storey shop buildings joined by larger double-storey Italianate shops.[73] The years immediately preceding World War I saw the first major wave of retail development in the municipality. It was at this time that many of Box Hill's major commercial buildings were erected, including the new post office, J R Ellingworth's real estate agency, and two large banks.[74]

In Mont Albert, although the Phoenix Park Estate had been subdivided in 1887, the first shops in Hamilton Street, adjacent to the railway station did not appear until 1912, and most of the shops date from the 1920s.[75] Blackburn's shopping centre also grew substantially in the inter-War period, and there are remnants of 1920s shops in Mitcham (Figure 13) and Nunawading, which also underwent expansion in the 1920s.

The enormous post-War growth in the municipality gave rise to a massive proliferation of shopping centres of all sizes. Many housing estates incorporated rows of four or five shops, often on corner sites, and shopping strips along major arterials grew. At Forest Hill, one of Melbourne's first American-style shopping centres was opened in 1964. In Box Hill, Whitehorse Plaza was constructed on the site of the old market in 1974, whilst the Box Hill Central shopping centre and public transport interchanged was completed in 1983. Australia's first K-Mart department store was built in East Burwood in April 1969. Other medium-scale developments in this period were shopping centres at Vermont South, Brentford Square (Forest Hill), Burwood East, and North Blackburn Square. Major retailers were also attracted to the Whitehorse Road corridor.

Commerce

Non-retail commercial development is a relatively recent theme in the history of the municipality, and it has only really been from the 1980s that major office developments have appeared in the area. Commercial developments which preceded this boom include Agfa-Gevaert, which established headquarters in Nunawading in 1957, and the Channel 0 (later Channel 10) studios, built in Forest Hill in 1965. The latter, designed by architects Hassell McConnell & Partners, was awarded a medal in the General Buildings category at the 1965 RAIA Awards. The complex is now known as Global Television Studios.

Figure 13   Inter-War Shops in Mitcham
            Source: Sydenham. *Windows on Nunawading.* p 114.

Factors which have influenced the change in land use of many large sites include the closure of welfare institutions and schools, and the selling-off or subdivision of agricultural properties. A case in point is the site bounded by Burwood Highway, Springvale and Highbury Roads and Burwood East Reserve, formerly occupied by the Tally Ho Boys' Farm, and now subdivided for housing and the Tally Ho Business Park. Overall, housing has been a more common new use for these sites. Box Hill is well established as a commercial centre, with higher density office buildings, most dating from the 1980s, complementing the retail core near the railway station. Telecommunications, water, gas and electricity providers also maintain a corporate presence in the municipality.

4.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SERVICES

4.1 Municipal Origins

Road Districts

The Nunawading District Road Board was proclaimed on 6 August 1857, its function to construct and maintain roads surveyed by the government in the area. The boundaries of the Board's jurisdiction coincided with those of Nunawading Parish.[76]

The Shires

Nunawading was one of the last District Road Boards to be proclaimed a shire. In 1863, the Government had provided for the formation of shires, allowing municipalities far greater self-reliance and responsibilities than merely those related to roads. The Nunawading Road Board had initially favoured a merger with its western neighbour, Boroondara, but by May 1871 the Boroondara Board had voted against this.[77] The *Shires Amendment Act* 1870 had allowed any Road District less than 100 square miles and with a total net annual value in rates of more than £12,000, to become a shire.[78] In May 1872, with very little fanfare or civic celebration, Nunawading Shire was proclaimed.[79]

When the *Local Government Act* of 1874 abolished Road Districts completely, Nunawading Shire was expanded to encompass the Templestowe Road District, to the north. This arrangement lasted only until the proclamation of the Shire of Bulleen in May 1875, but the temporary expansion of the council did prompt the building of the Shire's first permanent meeting place.

Figure 14   Nunawading Shire Hall, 1889
Source: Lemon. *Box Hill.* p 102.

Since its inception in 1857, the Road Board had occupied a number of meeting places, most notably Delaney's Royal Hotel in Canterbury Road, but such a meeting place was not deemed appropriate for a Shire. Thus the Shire Hall, a modest brick building with a corrugated iron roof, was built further east in Canterbury Road, near Gardiner's Creek; the location of the offices centrally in the Shire, rather than at Box Hill, reflected the lack of representation of Box Hill landholders on the council at the time. It was completed in late 1875 at a cost of £187/10/-.[80] In 1889, the council moved into new premises on the corner of Station and Cambridge Streets, designed by Arthur E Clark (Figure 14), and in 1922 an extra storey was added to it.[81]

Severance

It was almost universally accepted throughout the former municipality that the Shire of Nunawading was too diverse in character to be administered as a single entity.[82] After all, much of the eastern part of the municipality was still largely rural. Progress Associations and local business groups supported residents and councillors in pushing for the separation.

In 1925, pressure from ratepayers led to the Shire of Nunawading Councillors voting unanimously in favour of severing the Shire into two new municipalities: thus the Borough of Box Hill, and the Shire of Blackburn and Mitcham were created on 27 May 1925. Box Hill was made a City in 1927.[83]

The Shire of Blackburn and Mitcham

The Shire of Blackburn and Mitcham was temporarily housed in the Blackburn Recreation Hall, but by early November 1925 it found its first home in a modest timber Californian Bungalow style house on Lot 2, Keoghs Estate, in Whitehorse Road, near the site of the present Civic Centre. By December 1926, the councillors had begun negotiating new purpose-built council chambers; in the following October, the bungalow burnt down.[84] In late 1928 the council moved from temporary premises above a shop to its new brick building in Whitehorse Road, near Springvale Road.

The City of Nunawading

In 1937, there was considerable pressure from local lobby groups to sever Blackburn from the Shire.[85] By that time, internal ructions of council had moved to the issue of whether the shire should become a city. Despite questions as to whether City status would genuinely improve council services, the City of Nunawading was proclaimed on 30 May 1945, prompting the suburb of Tunstall to change its name to Nunawading accordingly.[86] By the mid-1960s, the council had outgrown its 1928 offices, and in 1964, a limited architectural competition was held to select a design for the new complex, on a large site which encompassed the site formerly occupied by the council's original bungalow premises. The winning design, by Gerd and Renate Block, was opened in 1968.[87] The large library was added in 1972, and the Arts Centre in 1985.[88]

The City of Box Hill

The City of Box Hill was officially proclaimed on 28 April 1927, after a short time as a Borough. Box Hill's meteoric growth during the 1920s meant its City status was inevitable, and the festivities which accompanied the designation have been well documented. From the time of inauguration of the new City council, there had been ideas for a new Town Hall, and in 1928, land in Whitehorse Road was compulsorily acquired for such a building in the future. The Depression halted any immediate plans, but by January 1934, the design and costing of the monumental new building was complete. The design was a collaboration between H J R Cole, the Town Clerk, F W Kerr, the Shire Engineer, Councillor and architect John Gawler, and Council Architect, Mr Aisbett. The Depression had lowered the cost of materials and labour, bringing the construction costs to £40,424, well below the estimate. The foundation stones were laid in August 1934, and the building was officially opened on 15 April 1935.[89]

The City of Whitehorse

The City of Whitehorse was created in 1994 by the merger of the Cities of Box Hill and Nunawading as part of the State Government's council amalgamation program. The first council elections of the new municipality were held in March 1997.

4.2   Essential Services

Gas

The first gas to be supplied to the municipality was from the Colonial Gas Company, which established its works at the corner of Whitehorse and Elgar Roads in 1889. Gas street lighting in Box Hill first appeared in 1890. The cost of laying gas mains restricted the supply to small parts of Box Hill and Surrey Hills, and in the ensuing decades the financial success of the company relied upon its supply of gas for street lighting.[90] Electricity was first used for street lighting from 1929.[91] Although it was one of the last gasworks to be established in Victoria, the Box Hill works was extended several times to keep up with demand for gas during the 1940s.[92] Natural gas was introduced to most of the municipality in 1969 and he Box Hill gasworks finally stopped production of coal gas in November of that year.[93]
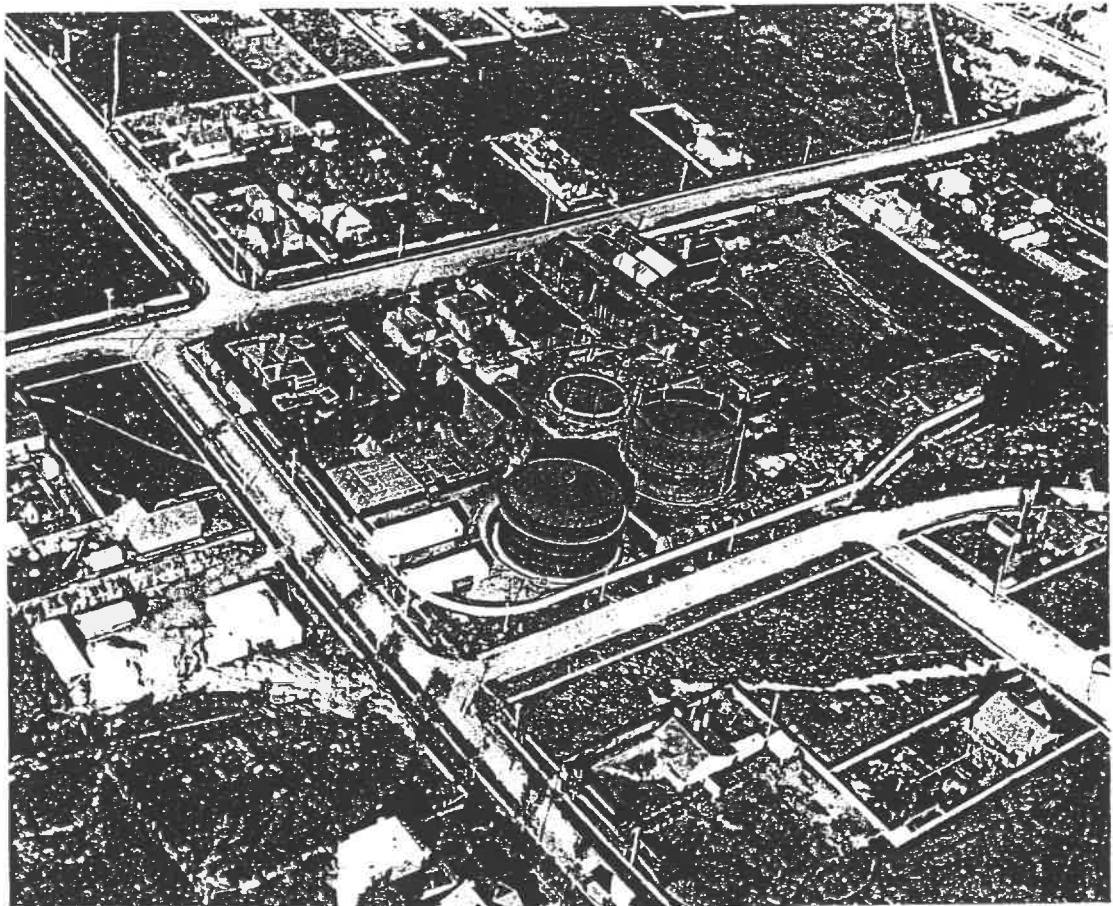
Figure 15   *Aerial view of the Colonial Gas Company's Works, Box Hill, c.1950s*
Source: Finlay & Morgan. *Those Were The Days.* p 20.

Water and Sewerage

After its creation in 1891, the first water reservoir built by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) was built that year in Surrey Hills (Canterbury Road), but ironically it was not designed to serve the Shire of Nunawading.[94] A second reservoir was built nearby, in Elgar Road, in 1912.[95] Mains water was available in Box Hill from 1894, but by the mid 1920s, the area was felt to have been neglected by the MMBW at the expense of the inner suburbs.[96] By 1926 the Mitcham reservoir and water tower added to the municipality's growing water infrastructure[97], and 1928 saw the beginning of MMBW sewering. Reticulated water did not reach most of the municipality until the late 1930s, and as late as the 1970s parts of Vermont South were still served by nightcart, with still more properties with septic tanks.[98]

Electricity

Under the Electric Light and Power Act of 1896, councils were permitted to control over distribution within their boundaries.[99] The Melbourne Electricity Supply Company began supplying the eastern suburbs in the early 1910s, and by 1912 the Shire of Nunawading had joined the councils of Brunswick, Northcote, Port Melbourne and Preston in obtaining an order to re-sell the MES Co.'s electricity to its residents.[100] By 1919, Nunawading Shire supplied electricity to 1424 properties; the service had quickly extended from Surrey Hills and Box Hill in 1914 to Mitcham and Vermont soon after. In 1924, the Shire began obtaining electricity from the newly-established State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV). When the Shire split in 1925, the Borough of Box Hill continued to supply electricity to both new municipalities. With the governmental abolition of local electricity companies in the early 1990s, the sharing of the Box Hill Electricity Supply's profits between the municipalities was a hotly-debated issue.[101]

Other Services

Other services arrived in the area gradually. A bushfire had been recorded in Box Hill in 1858[102], but a Fire Brigade did not exist until 1893, when stations were opened in Surrey Hills and Box Hill.[103] East of Middleborough Road, the first station was opened adjacent to the Shire Offices in 1951.[104] There had been a police presence in Box Hill since 1864[105], and Mitcham since 1888.[106]

Postal services had begun by the early 1860s, with the first post offices at Ballyshanassy township and in Box Hill[107], but Box Hill's first automatic telephone exchange did not open until May 1930.[108] The publication of Box Hill's first newspaper, the *Reporter*, coincided with the height of the land boom in June 1889.[109]

4.3   Roads

The municipality's first roads consisted of rough tracks used by timbercutters and farmers. By the 1850s, rough tracks across the municipality had begun to be shown on maps: these included an approximation of Mont Albert Road, which existed as a track from Barkers Road, in the west, east to Elgar Road.[110]

By about 1864, the Nunawading District Road Board has overseen the establishment of the roads now known as Whitehorse Road (Figure 16), Canterbury Road and Burwood Highway.[111] By 1879, north-south roads including the present Elgar Road, Station Street, Middleborough, Springvale, Mitcham and Heatherdale Roads had been formed, formalising the municipality's present network of primary roads.[112] The opening of the railway in 1882, and the subsequent beginnings of suburban subdivision, saw the first residential streets laid out, starting near Mont Albert and Box Hill railway stations, and stretching eastward along the railway line, although these were sparse east of Middleborough Road.[113]

Figure 16   White Horse Road, Box Hill, c.1870s
Source: Lemon. *Box Hill.* p 60.

Into the first decades of the twentieth century, the railway, not the road network, remained primary catalyst for suburban development of the area. By the mid-1920s few residents had cars, and asphalting of main roads did not begin until later that decade.[114] It was not until the 1950s and '60s that true suburban development was reflected in the street patterns of the municipality as a whole. The inter-War period had seen the road patterns of Surrey Hills and most of central Box Hill virtually finalised, but by 1945 the predominance of agricultural land use meant that most of the south-east of the municipality generally retained the road patterns of the 1910s.[115] By the 1980s, the present road network was almost completely established. In 1997, the character of the municipality's northern boundary has been substantially changed by the extension of the Eastern Freeway from Doncaster Road to Springvale Road. Proposals exist to extend it to Ringwood, and to build the Healesville Freeway, connecting with the proposed Scoresby Freeway through southern Forest Hill and Vermont.

4.4   Public Transport

Trains

The opening of the Camberwell to Lilydale railway on 1 December 1882 stimulated the extraordinary wave of large speculative subdivisions which characterised Box Hill and Surrey Hills, and to a lesser extent Blackburn, in the 1880s. The railway, which ran approximately parallel to Whitehorse Road, the municipality's main east-west road, was integral to the advertising of new housing estates, and to lure businesses to the east. The railway was also the reason for the flourishing tourism industry in the Victorian and Edwardian periods. The original 1880s railway stations—Mont Albert, Box Hill (Figure 17), Blackburn, Tunstall (Nunawading) and Mitcham—all attracted some degree of building development near them.

Real improvement to the train service came at the same time as the council was acknowledging the need to seal roads. The railway was electrified in 1923, whilst the construction of two additional stations—Laburnum and Heatherdale—in 1958 reflected the demands of post-War commuters.[116] In 1983, the Box Hill Central shopping centre, incorporating the new underground railway station and rooftop bus interchange was completed: it remains an unusual combination of shopping centre and public transport terminus.

Trams

The establishment of tram services in the west of the municipality came at the time of the Melbourne's second wave of tramways development, in the 1910s, although it was twenty years earlier that the municipality was the site of Australia's first electric tramway, which operated along Station Street, from Whitehorse Road to Doncaster Road, by the Box Hill and Doncaster Tramway Co. from October 1889 until January 1896.[117]

The first tram service proper to reach within the Shire's boundaries was the Riversdale Road route. Integral to its establishment was that of Wattle Park (see **6.5**), which was used to justify the extension of the Riversdale Road tram to Warrigal Road in March 1917, and then to its present Elgar Road terminus in June 1928.[118]

For fifty years, the Hawthorn Tramways Trust service along Toorak Road, from Camberwell Depot to Warrigal Road, stopped just short of the municipality's western boundary. It was not until 1976 that this route was extended along Burwood Highway to Middleborough Road, and in 1994 to Blackburn Road, connecting East Burwood with the city.[119]
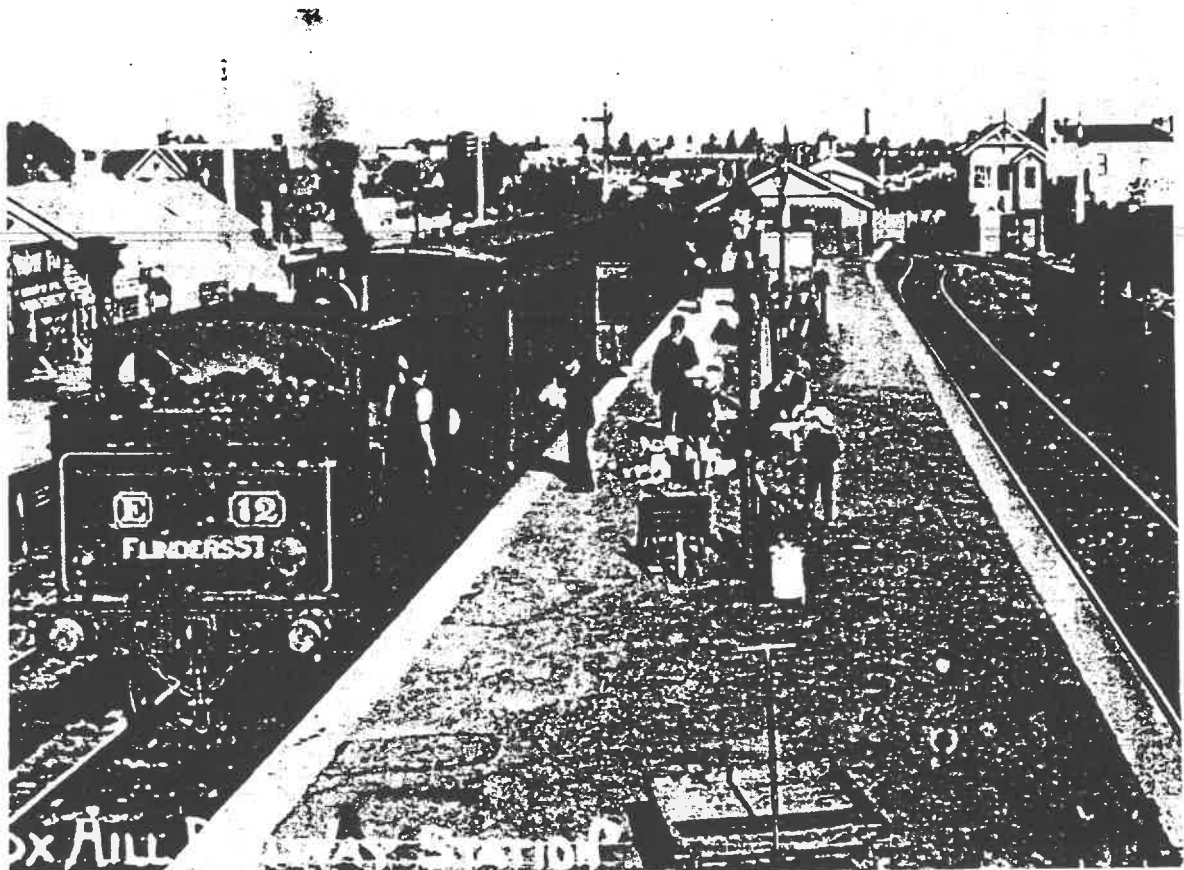
Figure 17   *Box Hill Railway Station looking east, c.1909.*
                 Source: Lemon. *Box Hill.* p 124.

Buses

Bus services first served the Shire of Nunawading in the early 1920s. The Mitcham and Vermont Community Bus, established in 1923 by Councillor Norman Armstrong finally linked Vermont with the railway line,[120] and during the next decades private bus routes gradually made the outlying parts of the municipality accessible to prospective residents. From 1937 Burwood, without its own fixed rail route, had been served by a bus to Box Hill via Box Hill South.[121] By the 1970s an extensive network of bus routes throughout the municipality had been established to bring commuters to railway stations.

5.0   INSTITUTIONS

5.1   Religion

The earliest land surveys allowed for several reserves, although their exact purposes were not specified.[122] In 1854, two acres on the north-east corner of Warrigal and Riversdale Roads was granted jointly to the Church of England and the Catholic Church. By 1857, the latter had erected St Bridget's, a brick building for use as a chapel and a school. The Church of England did not build on the same reserve, and it was not until 1861 that they erected their first building, a school house (also used as a church) on the corner of Canterbury Road and Bedford Street.[123]

Another church reserve, on the south side of Burwood Road, had been granted in 1855 to the Methodists, who were by far the most represented denomination amongst Nunawading's early settlers. A timber building, for use as a school and a church, was erected in 1856.[124] Other Methodist churches were established by devout settlers who built them on their own land. In 1856 alone, John Ellingworth erected a school and chapel on his land in Station Street, and Joseph Aspinall built a sandstone church on his land in Woodhouse Grove.[125] Primitive Methodist (1862) and United Methodist (1872) churches were both built in Whitehorse Road, and a timber Wesleyan chapel was erected at Mount Pleasant (Forest Hill) in 1865. The Wesleyans took over the old Primitive Methodist church in 1883, and built new churches in Station Street, Box Hill (1885), Surrey Hills (1888) and Blackburn (1891).[126]
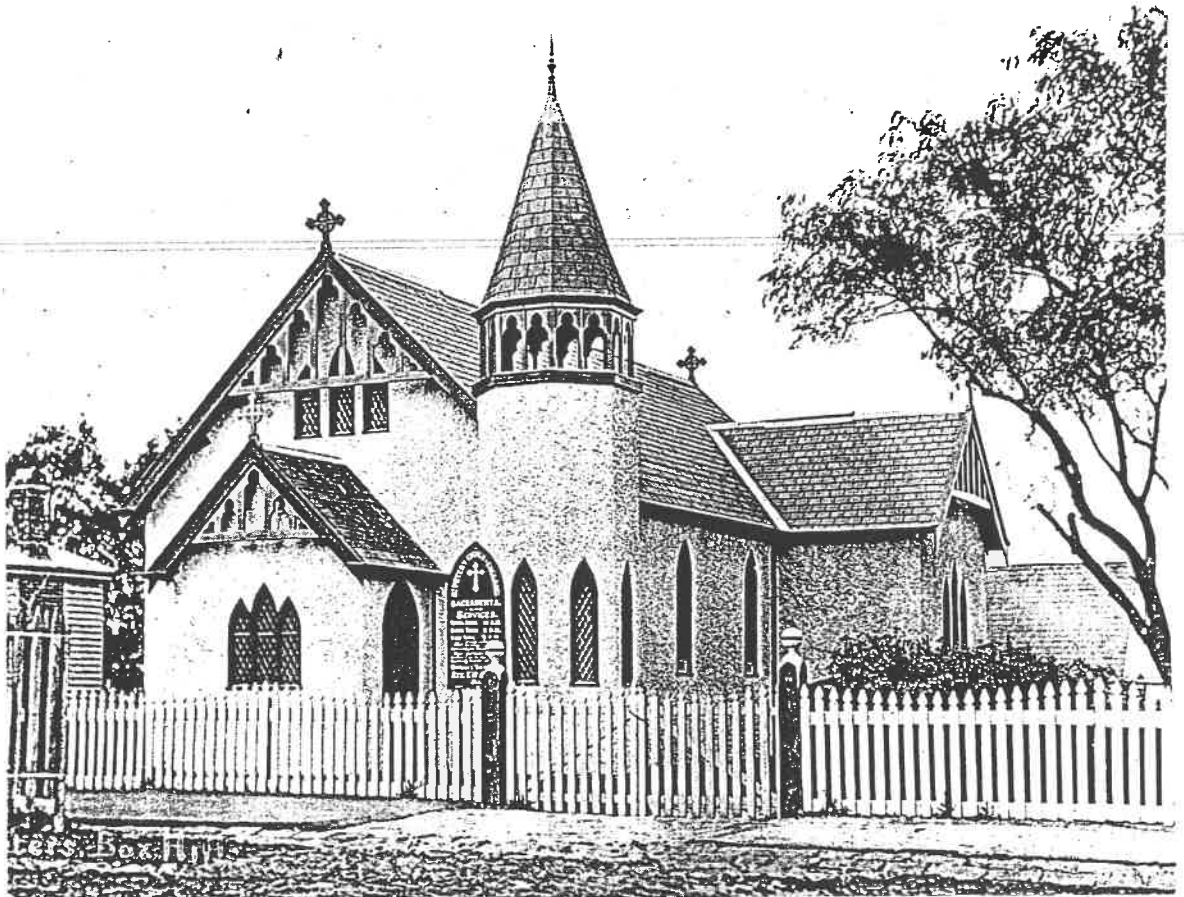

Figure 18   *St Peter's Church of England, Box Hill (1908)*
Source: Finlay & Morgan. *The Days Before Yesterday.* p 53.

Other denominations tentatively established their presence. An Independent church, built in Springfield Road in 1869, was the first in the area to have a resident clergyman.[127] Another Catholic church and school was established in 1872, in Mitcham. The Church of England built their first church in Box Hill proper in 1883, moving to the present site at Whitehorse Road six years later. By 1890, Churches of England had also been established in Surrey Hills, Mitcham and Blackburn. The first Presbyterian church in Box Hill, a timber chapel in Court Street, did not appear until 1889.[128]

There were few entirely new congregations established in the early twentieth century, with most new churches being built by the already well-established congregations, who had outgrown their earlier buildings. The St Bridget's Catholic church closed, and was replaced by a new building on Mont Albert Road. New and larger premises were also built in Box Hill for the Methodists (1902), the Church of England (1908; Figure 18), the Presbyterians (1911)and the Catholics (1912).[129] The Methodists also built new churches on their old sites at Surrey Hills (1915) and Mount Pleasant (1916). This pattern of replacing existing churches continued; in 1926 alone, the old churches of the Baptists (Station Street), Catholics (Whitehorse Road) and Methodists (Oxford Street) were all replaced with new buildings. In 1935, the Presbyterian congregation in Box Hill replaced their timber chapel with a "new" building, in the form of the old West Melbourne Presbyterian church, which was dismantled and re-erected in Whitehorse Road.[130]

The post-War period saw more new congregations being established, as denominations expanded into areas where there had previously been no churches. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, there were new Presbyterians churches at Wattle Park and Vermont, a new Church of England in Forest Hill, Baptist churches in North and South Blackburn, and a Catholic church in Box Hill North.[131] By the late 1950s, many of the long-established congregations had once again outgrown their buildings, and once again a rebuilding programme took place. New churches, most designed by noted contemporary architects, replaced the older ones at Christ Church, Mitcham (1958) and St James' Presbyterian, Wattle Park (1964). Denominations such as the Seventh Day Adventists (Centre Road, Blackburn) and the Mormons (Whitehorse Road, Blackburn) built completely new churches in this period.

The post-War influx of migrants also saw the establishment of numerous churches for hitherto unrepresented denominations, including the Dutch Reformed and Greek Orthodox churches in Box Hill. Even more recently, a Sikh temple in Blackburn and a Buddhist Temple in Forest Hill have been officially recognised as places of worship.[132]

5.2 Education

The earliest schools in what is now the City of Whitehorse were denominational. That is, the actual buildings were used for educational purposes during the week, and for religious purposes on Sundays. This was the case with the early congregations discussed above—the Methodists at Burwood and Box Hill (both 1856), the Catholics at Surrey Hills, (1857) and the Church of England at Canterbury Road (1861; Figure 19). By the early 1860s, secular schools had opened in Nunawading and Forest Hill.[133] The Denominational School Board was superseded in 1862 by the new Board of Education, and all school thereafter became numbered common schools.

In 1872, the new Education Act began a system of free and compulsory education. However, no new public schools appeared in the shire until the Nunawading North State School in 1880. The Land Boom caused a population increase, and new schools were built at Box Hill, Mitcham, Blackburn and Surrey Hills. In the 1890s, two of the oldest schools in the shire had their allowances withdrawn by the Department of Education. One of these, the former Church of England school in Canterbury Road closed in 1894, and the other, St Bridget's Catholic school, survived for a few more years as a private school.[134] Private

schools, which generally ran in private houses, had flourished since the Boom. In Box Hill, these included Banff Ladies' College, New College (later Box Hill Grammar) and Surrey College.[135] The first private school in Mitcham opened in 1883, and within a decade, there were nine in the entire Shire of Nunawading.[136] A private girls' school, Ormiston House, was established in Mont Albert in 1900, and this later became the junior school campus of Camberwell Girls' Grammar.

In 1913, an open-air school was established in Blackburn as an experiment in teaching sickly children.[137] The establishment of conventional public schools picked up in the 1920s, and new schools appeared at Blackburn South, Tunstall, Box Hill South and Wattle Park. In 1929, Box Hill Grammar both relocated to new and larger premises, and work began on the first high school, also in Box Hill. The first technical school had appeared five years earlier, although it only accepted female students. The establishment of this school, which was the first girls' technical school in Victoria, had been spurred by the prominent educationalist Frank Tate, who was a Box.Hill resident.[138] A technical school for boys did not appear in Box Hill until 1943.

The high post-War birth rate caused overcrowding in schools. In 1955, new high schools were built at Nunawading and Burwood—the first since the one at Box Hill almost thirty years earlier. In the decade that followed, no less than fifteen new public schools were built, comprising six high schools (including Blackburn, Mitcham, Wattle Park and Vermont), three technical schools (Burwood, Blackburn and Mitcham), and six state primary schools (including Blackburn North, Nunawading South, Antonio Park and Laburnum).[139]

Figure 19   *Common School No. 469, Delaney's (Canterbury) Road, Box Hill*
Source: Finlay & Morgan. *The Days Before Yesterday.* p 57.

The Catholic church established two new schools in the Box Hill area in the 1950s. Because land was plentiful, the municipality was also attractive to private schools from other municipalities who were outgrowing their premises. Presbyterian Ladies' College had relocated from East Melbourne to Burwood in 1938; their lead was followed by Mt Scopus College, the first Jewish day school in Australia, which moved to Burwood from St Kilda in 1951.[140] In the early 1960s, Camberwell Grammar School purchased land near Blackburn Lake for a proposed school, although it never eventuated.

The first tertiary institute in Whitehorse was St Paschal's College, a theological training college and monastery which opened in Box Hill South in 1936.[141] The Christian Brothers established a similar institution nearby in 1952. Burwood Teachers' College, later the State College of Victoria, opened in 1954. It is now a campus of Deakin University, and has expanded to take over the adjacent Bennettswood Primary and Burwood High school sites. A technical college, now Box Hill TAFE, was built in 1977 on the old gasworks site in Elgar Road. This institute, which grew out of the two technical schools in Box Hill, has since established several other campuses elsewhere in the municipality.

There has been much change in the schools in Whitehorse in the last decade. At least eighteen schools have been closed and most of these demolished, including Box Hill, Koonung Heights and Warrawong Primary Schools, Wattle Park High School and Burwood Technical School. Several of the schools which remain have been renamed.

5.3   Hospitals

The first medical practice in Box Hill was established in 1886.[142] By the turn of the century, there were only three doctors in the area—two in Box Hill, and one in Windsor Crescent, Surrey Hills.[143] In 1922, the Dunstaffage Private Hospital was set up in the former mansion of Mrs Henry Scott, on the corner of Highbury Road and Warrigal Road, Burwood. From the 1920s onwards, other similar hospitals were established in Box Hill, Blackburn and Surrey Hills and Mitcham, many in private residences.

After many delays, the foundation stone of the new Box Hill and District Hospital was laid in 1950. The new hospital, designed by noted hospital architects Stephenson & Turner, was officially opened six years later.[144] It was the only public hospital in the municipality until the Dunstaffage Private Hospital became the Burwood and District Community Hospital. With only eighteen beds, it was the smallest public hospital in Melbourne until its closure in 1996.[145]

Private hospitals have since been established at Blackburn South, and the Mitcham Hospital has been rebuilt on a new site. The Surrey Private Hospital (formerly the Mont Albert and Surrey Hills Hospital) in Broughton Road, was built adjacent to the old Kinross Private Hospital, which has been remodelled as a nursing home; both have now closed.

5.4   Welfare

One of the first major welfare institutions to open in Whitehorse was the Burwood Boys' Home, established in 1896 on land donated by a Melbourne philanthropist.[146] A few years later, the Methodists, who had always been a strong presence in Box Hill, sought to establish a similar institution for disadvantaged boys. They purchased land in 1903 in a district of Burwood known as Tally-Ho, from which the home took its name. It was developed as a training farm, allowing boys to 'develop discipline and good character through hard work and healthy living'.[147] The opportunity for farming also led the Adult Deaf and Dumb Society (later the Adult Deaf Mute Association) to purchase land near Blackburn Lake in 1908. In addition to a farm, accommodation was provided for 'aged, infirm, mentally defective and blind deaf-mutes'.[148]

In 1913, the Salvation Army set up a new boys' home on the corner of Elgar and Canterbury Roads, after a fire had destroyed their property at Bayswater. Later, they established a men's hostel, the Inala Village, now an extensive village complex, in Blackburn South. The first infant welfare centre in Box Hill was established in temporary quarters in 1923. Two years later, it relocated to a purpose-built premises on the council reserve in the middle of Whitehorse Road. In 1929, a similar centre was opened in Mitcham in the Memorial Hall.

The establishment of welfare institutions picked up in the post-War period. Apart from the Orana orphanage in Burwood (1953), these tended to be more specialised than they had been in the past. The Eastbridge Migrant Hostel (1950) and the Winlaton girls' training centre (1954) were both built in Nunawading, and the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind and the Princess Elizabeth School for Deaf Children, both in Burwood, became important regional facilities. Facilities for disabled children also began to appear, including several special schools as well as the Alkira Day Training Centre in Box Hill (1955) and the NADRASCA Centre in Nunawading (1967).[149]

Few of the early welfare institutions are still in existence, and many of the sites themselves have been obliterated by redevelopment. The Tally-Ho Boys' Farm, which closed in 1976, is now the Tally-Ho Technology Park. A retirement village occupies the site of the Burwood Boys' Home. The Eastbridge Migrant Hostel was demolished in 1988, and the new Eastern Mail Centre was erected on part of the site. Many others, including Winlaton in Nunawading and the Orana Home in Burwood (Figure 20), have been redeveloped as residential subdivisions.
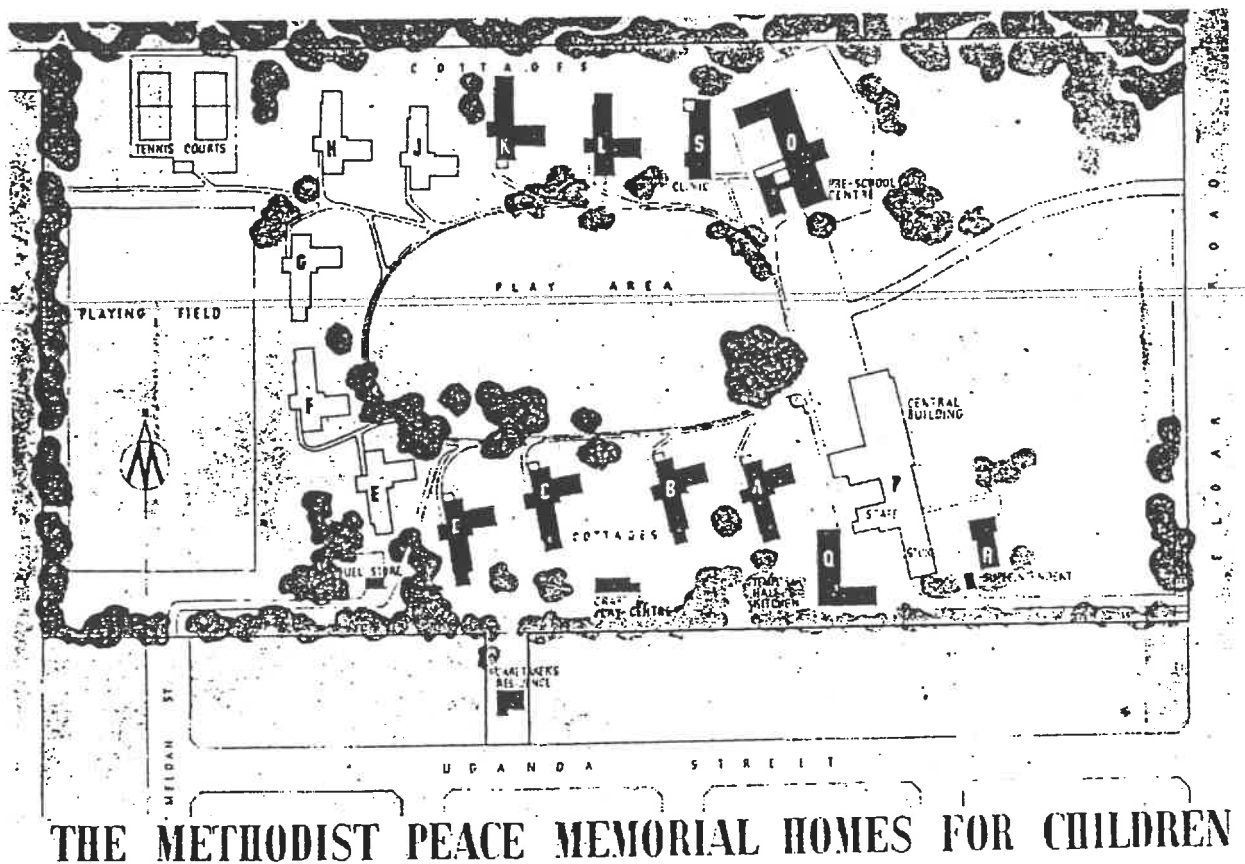
Figure 20   *Plan of Orana, the Methodist Peace Memorial Homes, Elgar Road, Burwood showing the spacious grounds of its suburban site*
Source: Howe & Swain. All God's Children. p 117.

5.5 Cemeteries

In 1858, five acres of land in Ballyshanassy (Burwood) was gazetted as a cemetery, at the request of local residents who were tired of travelling to Melbourne for funerals.[150] This was the only official cemetery in present-day Whitehorse for fifteen years, although burials also took place in the grounds of the Methodist church in Station Street, Box Hill and the Catholic church at Mitcham. The former relocated to a new site in 1872, which may have been the impetus for a public meeting held that year to form a cemetery trust.[151] The proposed site was a large reserve on the corner of Whitehorse and Middleborough Road, then partly occupied by the police paddock and a state school. On 29 August 1873, ten acres were gazetted for a cemetery, and the first interment, of a three week old infant, took place the following day. A further two acres of the reserve was acquired in 1877, and another three acres in 1886.

In 1897, developer T R B Morton petitioned, unsuccessfully, for a new Metropolitan General Cemetery to be located in Blackburn.[152] A few years later, the burial ground behind the Catholic church in Mitcham was closed; the tombstones were removed, and it is now the site of the parish school.[153] Thus, by the early twentieth century, the only cemeteries in Whitehorse were at Box Hill and Burwood. Both were extended in 1935.[154]

At Burwood, the north-east boundary was extended so that the cemetery effectively occupied the entire block. At Box Hill, an extra fourteen acres of land were gazetted so that the cemetery extended to Middleborough Road. The recreation reserve which formerly occupied this land was moved north, where it became the present-day Whitehorse Reserve. In 1979, the main entrance on Whitehorse Road was closed in favour of a new entry off Middleborough Road, although the ceremonial gates were retained *in situ*.

5.6 Meeting Places and Local Organisations

Progress Associations

Progress associations in the Box Hill and Nunawading area came about as a reaction to the Boer War.[155] In 1900, the British Army victory at Mafeking caused the entire Empire to celebrate. The citizens of Surrey Hills held processions with bunting and fireworks. Not to be upstaged, Box Hill residents formed a progress association to organise their own celebrations, and the Nunawading Shire Council formed a special committee. When the celebrations were over, the new Box Hill Progress Association moved on to other municipal improvements. It was superseded in 1915 by the Nunawading Citizens' Association.[156]

By the 1930s, progress associations had been formed under the names of Blackburn, Middleborough, Burwood and District, Mont Albert, Mitcham and Vermont, and even Irishtown, after the former name for the area around Surrey Park. The number of progress associations in the Nunawading area increased dramatically from the 1950s, when 'new people moved into the area, determined to develop it into a modern, thriving community with all the amenities Australians were coming to expect after the lean years of the war'. Citizens' groups formed in the post-War period included the Blackburn North, Box Hill South, and Heatherdale District Progress Associations, as well as the Malcolm Street (Blackburn) Citizens' Group, and the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society.[157]

The various associations lobbied for such things as tree planting, street lighting, road surfacing and public transport. Many buildings in present-day Whitehorse, including kindergartens, libraries, halls and elderly citizens' clubs, owe their existence to the lobbying, and often fundraising, of the progress associations. Most of these associations disbanded in the 1960s and 1970s for the simple reason that the various improvements they fought for had been implemented; the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society is one of the few which still flourishes.

Masonic Lodges

Although Freemasons had met in Box Hill's Barkly Hall since the 1860s, it was not until 1889 that the first purpose-built Masonic temple was erected.[158] A new temple was built in Station Street in 1923 and was later remodelled with a new facade.[159] A Masonic temple was built in Clarke Street, Blackburn, in 1928.[160]

Community Halls and Centres

The first public hall appeared on the north side of Whitehorse Road in 1864. Named Barkly Hall in honour of the then governor, it was used as a meeting place by freemasons, political and religious groups, charities, and even the Nunawading Road Board.[161] The new and larger Box Hill Recreation Hall was built on the south side of Whitehorse Road in 1885, and the obsolete Barkly Hall was demolished soon after. Other nineteenth-century recreation halls included Mill's Recreation Hall in Albany Crescent, Surrey Hills (1885), Gordon Hall in Elgar Road, Box Hill (1889), and the Blackburn Recreation Hall, on the corner of Blackburn and Central Roads (1889). The latter was built by developer T R B Morton for his proposed housing estate beside Blackburn Lake. It was demolished in 1964 for the construction of the new Blackburn library.

The Recreation Hall in Box Hill was used for many purposes until the late 1920s, when it was remodelled as a cinema. By that time, public halls had also been established at Box Hill South, East Burwood and Forest Hill. The Mitcham Memorial Hall was opened in 1925 after several years of planning and fundraising.[162] It was managed by the RSL until 1955, when it was taken over by the Nunawading Council before being demolished in 1988.

6.0   RECREATION AND THE ARTS

6.1   Hotels

The first hotel in Whitehorse eventually gave the municipality its name. In 1853, Patrick Trainor erected a two-storey brick hotel, which he named the White Horse, on what was then known as the Great Gipps Land Road. It enjoyed a monopoly until Dennis Delaney opened the Royal Hotel in 1856, on the corner of present-day Canterbury and Broughton Roads, Surrey Hills.[163] By 1858, the Harkaway Inn was built on the corner of Blackburn and Highbury Roads in Burwood East, which was followed by several other hotels in the Burwood area, including the Tally-Ho, the Thornecombe, the Boundary, and the Burwood Family.[164] The first hotel in Blackburn was the Traveller's Rest, erected on Whitehorse Road in 1861 as a changing station for horses on the Cobb and Co. coach service from Melbourne to Lilydale.[165] It was followed in 1868 by the King George Hotel at Blackburn Creek. In Mitcham, the Hill Hotel and the Reserve Hotel were built on opposite corners at the intersection of Mitcham and Whitehorse Roads.[166]

Andrew Lemon noted Box Hill's earliest hotels were 'a mixed bag, and none of them seemed to have been very profitable'.[167] Many that were built failed to see out the century. The Harvest Home Hotel in Mitcham, which operated from the front room of John McGlone's house in Whitehorse Road, closed in 1889.[168] The King George Hotel in Blackburn ceased operating in 1905, and most of the hotels in Burwood had also closed by that time. However, the two oldest hotels in the area, the White Horse and the Royal, thrived and both were completely rebuilt in the late 1880s.[169] The new Railway Hotel was erected in 1882 on the prominent corner of Station Street and Whitehorse Road in Box Hill, and was extensively remodelled in 1911 (Figure 21).

Figure 21   *Railway Hotel, Box Hill, built 1882, closed 1921.*
Source: Finlay & Morgan. *The Days Before Yesterday.* p 2.

The Temperance movement, always been strong in the Box Hill area, was further strengthened by Prohibition in the United States. In 1920, a fervent anti-liquor campaign was begun by local politician E W Greenwood, and he gained many supporters.[170] At that time, hotel licensing legislation had a Local Option clause, so voters in any district could support prohibition without forcing it onto other districts who were not in favour. Greenwood took advantage of this, and when a poll was held, the districts of Nunawading and Boroondara reached the required 60% majority. Box Hill's three hotels, along with two in Burwood and seven in Camberwell, were closed on New Year's Day, 1921.[171] Most were subsequently demolished, although the Railway Hotel was remodelled as a shop and coffee palace, and the eponymous White Horse Hotel reopened as a mere boarding house. When the latter was demolished in 1934, an enterprising citizen obtained the White Horse statue and the original doorway on which it stood. They were offered to the council for re-erection, and John Gawler, architect and Box Hill councillor, designed a setting on the reserve in the middle of Whitehorse Road. The statue has since been replaced by a replica, and the original was placed on display in the Box Hill Town Hall.

No hotels have been built in the Box Hill 'dry area' since the Liquor Ban, although they have appeared elsewhere in the municipality. In 1929, the Traveller's Rest Hotel in Blackburn was rebuilt as the Blackburn Hotel, which was demolished in the 1980s for the present hotel.[172] The Reserve Hotel in Mitcham, although considerably altered, remains as one of the earliest surviving hotels in the municipality. Two completely new hotels were erected in the 1960s—the Burvale in East Burwood, and the bravely named Whitehorse Hotel, on the corner of Whitehorse and Moncrieff Roads, Nunawading.[173] The latter, like its famous namesake, has since been demolished.

Figure 22   Mitcham Memorial Hall
Source: Sydenham. *Windows on Nunawading.* p 163.

6.2   Drive-Ins and Cinemas

Moving pictures were shown as part of a Cinematographic exhibition at the Box Hill Annual Show in 1907, but it was not until 1911 that regular screenings began.[174] Throughout Australia at that time, films were screened in any large open space which could accommodate seating and a projector, including church halls, town halls, public halls, or even parks. In the Box Hill area, the main venue was the Recreation Hall on Whitehorse Road, although films were also shown in the recreation halls at Blackburn and Surrey Hills.

The first purpose-built cinema, or 'picture palace,' in Australia was built in Sydney in 1910, and many others soon appeared in various cities and suburbs.[175] It was in 1920 that the first one appeared in the municipality, when the 1,200-seat New Theatre was erected on the corner of Whitehorse Road and Watts Street.[176] The old Recreation Hall on the other side of the road could not cope with the competition, and promptly reverted to being a dance hall. Nine year later, however, it was remodelled, emerging triumphantly as the Rialto Theatre. Not to be outdone, the competing New Theatre immediately changed its named to the Lyric Theatre; in 1937, it was remodelled and changed its name again, this time to the Regent.[177]

The first drive-in cinema in Australia was opened in Burwood in 1954.[178] The introduction of television in 1956 saw the gradual closure of many Australian cinemas, and the Rialto in Box Hill closed three years later. It was subsequently remodelled as a shopping arcade. Its long-time competitor, the Regent, survived until 1970.[179] Like most of the drive-ins in metropolitan Melbourne, the one at Burwood closed in the 1980s. The site is now occupied by the United Energy Service Centre.

No cinemas were erected in the former Nunawading municipality in the 'picture palace' era. Instead, films were shown in the various local halls. The Mitcham Memorial Hall (Figure 22), completed in 1925, showed films for many years. Indeed, the vacant site had been used for open-air film screenings in the early 1920s to raise funds for the erection of the building itself.[180] The Blackburn Recreation Hall, near the railway in Blackburn Road, was still being used as a cinema in the 1960s. When it was proposed to demolish the hall for a new library, the proprietor was unimpressed, as he had just spent £3000 on a new projector.[181] The first purpose-built theatre in the Nunawading area was erected in Mahoneys Road, Forest Hill, in the 1960s.[182] A multi-screen Hoyts cinema complex was built when the Forest Hill Chase shopping centre, on the opposite side of Mahoneys Road, was remodelled in the 1980s. The earlier theatre has been remodelled as a health and fitness centre.

6.3   The Arts

Music and Drama

A dramatic club had been formed in Box Hill as early as 1888.[183] Bands became popular in the first two decades of this century, and many were formed including the Box Hill Military Band, the Box Hill Temperance Brass Band, and the Nunawading District Brass Band. In the 1930s, former child star Iris Roderick was a central figure in Box Hill's theatrical community. She produced plays for the Box Hill Operatic Society, as well as forming her own School of Dancing.[184] In the early 1930s, many amateur groups were formed; in Mitcham alone, these included the Mitcham Choral and Orchestral Society, the Mitcham and District Musical and Dramatic Society, and the Mitcham Musical Society.[185] In the 1940s, similar groups were inaugurated in Box Hill, and the band and the operatic society were both revived.[186]

Performances, whether musical or dramatic, mostly took place in local recreation halls. An arts centre had been part of the original brief for the Nunawading Civic Centre in 1964, but it was eliminated from the masterplan when residents baulked at rising costs.[187] The present Whitehorse Centre, which includes a 400 seat auditorium, was built as the Nunawading Arts Centre in 1985 to the design of local architect David Gawler (former Nunawading councillor and mayor), son of John Gawler (architect and former Box Hill councillor). The Phoenix Theatre is located within the confines of the Deakin University site at Burwood; among other things, it is the base for the Whitehorse Musical Theatre Company. The Oxford Children's Theatre, which stages pantomimes and the like, operates in the old Methodist Church in Station Street, Box Hill.

Visual Arts

In 1885, a group of painters set up a camp on the banks of Gardiner's Creek in Box Hill South, eager to implement the techniques of plein-air painting which they had seen while travelling through Europe. This group included then-unknown painters Tom Roberts, Louis Abrahams and Frederick McCubbin. Many of their now-famous paintings used the local landscape as a backdrop. Roberts's *The Artist's Camp* depicts the site at Gardiner's Creek, and McCubbin's *The Bush Burial* was painted while being 'carefully posed at Blackburn with a specially dug grave'.[188]

After three years, the artists relocated their studio to Eaglemont. Soon after, they achieved public acclaim through their famous '9x5' Exhibition, and what might have become known as the Box Hill School instead went down in history as the Heidelberg School. But, as Andrew Lemon has pointed out, 'the real school, the place where the artists learnt to paint with light and landscape, was at Houston's Farm at the beyond of Box Hill.'[189] The important historical link between the Heidelberg School painters and the Box Hill area has not been forgotten. A large exhibition of their paintings was held in the Town Hall to celebrate the centenary of Box Hill in 1957.[190] More recently, the Whitehorse Council endeavoured to obtain McCubbin's *Bush Idyll*, which he painted in Blackburn in 1893.[191]

Since then, artists have thrived in Whitehorse. The Mitcham Arts Association was formed in 1962, and they established their headquarters (which included clubrooms, gallery and pottery studio) at 16 Humphreys Street.[192] Facilities such as the Box Hill Community Arts Centre (designed by noted architect Greg Burgess) and the Whitehorse Centre remain foci for the art community.

6.4 Sporting Facilities

Organised sport had existed in the municipality since the 1860s, when hotelier Dennis Delaney hosted athletics and horse racing adjacent to the White Horse Hotel. It was in the 1890s, however, that there was a critical mass of what Lemon calls "manifestations of civic energy"[193], and several sporting clubs were formed. Sporting facilities remained primitive until the following decade, when council acknowledged the important role played by sport in the growing area, largely rural though it was.

The Mitcham Football Club, founded in 1888, is one of the oldest sporting clubs in the municipality, with many of its players employees at the Australian Tessellated Tile Company.[194] Football clubs were also established at Box Hill (1892), Nunawading (1893) and Burwood (1897), and sporting facilities including a cricket oval and tennis courts were integral to the Freehold Investment and Banking Company's speculative Blackburn Lake subdivision.[195] The late 1800s also saw the emergence of golf, played on Harston's paddock in Mont Albert, cricket and fox hunting. The municipality's first playing field, lobbied for by the Box Hill Cricket and Football Clubs, on a site south of the railway line in Box Hill, was cleared in 1893, although most sports matches were still held on private land.[196]
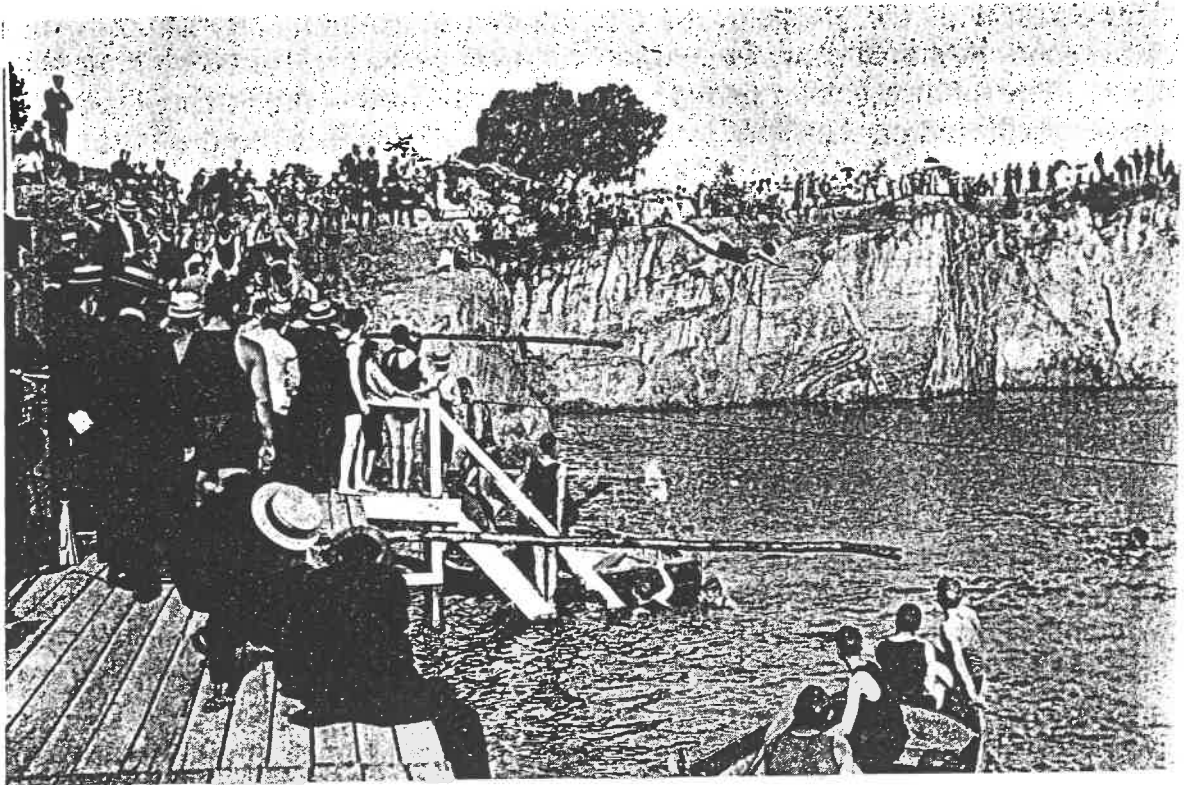
Figure 23   *The Surrey Dive, Box Hill, in the former Box Hill Brickworks' claypit.*
Source: Lemon. *Box Hill.* p 132.

The early twentieth century saw the expansion of sports facilities when in 1903-05 the council purchased a number of recreational facilities, including Surrey Park in Box Hill, Morton Park in Blackburn, and ten-acre sites in Mitcham and East Burwood.[197] Box Hill Cricket Club was formed in 1902, and a bowling green was established in Whitehorse Road, Box Hill.[198] Walker Park in Mitcham was acquired from E E Walker in 1910, and by the 1920s was the area's local sports ground.[199] By the late 1920s, sports catered for locally had been extended to include greyhound racing, athletics, cycling, soccer and lacrosse, and tennis clubs in Mitcham and Vermont boomed.[200] Wattle Park Golf Course was laid out in the 1930s, and was later joined by golf courses on Gardiners Creek in Box Hill South and Dandenong Creek in Vermont South.

The post-War growth of the municipality included the establishment of many new sporting facilities in newly-subdivided areas, and the expansion of existing clubs. Wembley Park in Box Hill was established as a major soccer venue, and in 1951 Box Hill Football Club joined the Victorian Football Association; this prestige was apparently a selling-point for local real estate.[201] The municipality now caters for a wide variety of sports including rugby, gridiron, cycling, basketball, athletics, ten-pin bowling, netball and volleyball.

The first swimming facilities were dams and claypits. In Nunawading, clay holes such as that near the Tunstall tile works doubled as swimming holes, as did the East Mitcham dam and Morton's dam.[202] The old claypit was already in use as a de facto swimming hole, and when the council purchased it in 1905, it fenced the hole, and built a bathing shed and diving platforms. The Surrey Dive, as it was known, became a major recreational focus for the area, and was the site of many swimming carnivals. (Figure 23) It was closed for safety reasons in 1968 leaving the adjacent purpose-built pool, constructed in 1939, the municipality's only swimming facility[203] until the opening of the Nunawading Memorial Swimming Pool in 1960. This pool was covered and heated in 1976, at the same time plans were afoot to renovate Box Hill's old pool. Box Hill's indoor pool complex was opened in the 1980s.[204]

6.5 Parks and Gardens

The pockets of remnant bushland in the municipality have, perhaps ironically, long been used to attract suburban development to the area. Blackburn Lake, long a passive recreational focus for Blackburn, was created as the centrepiece of the 1888 Blackburn Model Town estate, and is now an important bird habitat. (Figure 24) Owned by the Adult Deaf and Dumb Society since 1909, it was re-zoned as a public park by the MMBW in 1954, and gradually taken into the council ownership from 1975.[205] The nearby Blackburn Creeklands Reserve and Furness Park have similarly influenced the semi-rural, landscape character of the surrounding streets. Other such natural open spaces within the municipality generally occur along or near watercourses, and include Yarran Dheran (originally a quarry) and Antonio Park in Mitcham, Campbells Croft and Bellbird Dell in Vermont.

One of the earliest formally landscaped spaces in the area was The Ovals in Box Hill, on the site of the present Whitehorse Road median strip. In 1883, Whitehorse Road comprised a three chain wide road reserve with two narrow strips of roadway. By 1889, the central roadway had been moved to the south boundary, and the median fenced. Improvements over the years included tree planting and the erection of the Boer War memorial drinking fountain and the bowling green (1900), a rotunda (1911), the RSL Hall and Clubroom (later used as the library, demolished c.1974) and war memorial (1922) and the White Horse statue (1934).[206]

The 1920s saw the creation of the Kingsley Gardens, near the corner of Whitehorse and Elgar Roads, on the site of the former Lloyd's abattoir (1921), and the Box Hill Gardens, the competition for the design of which attracted a prize of ten guineas, and included a new courts for the Box Hill Tennis Club.[207]

Blackburn Lake.

THE LAKE and Picnic Grounds are now thrown open to the public free, and are availed of by thousands of merry bands of picnickers; every want is catered for at the refreshment rooms on the banks of the Lake. Hot water can be had. All kinds of summer drinks, light refreshments, &c. Boats can be hired by the hour. Picnic Parties engaging the Hall for the evening, will find the Lake a delightful place to spend the day, it is only ten minutes walk from the Hall; the scenery round about is superb, and well repays one for the walk.

Figure 24   Advertisement for Blackburn Lake
Source: Sydenham. *Windows on Nunawading.* p 199.

Wattle Park, officially opened to the public on 31 March 1917, is an interesting mix of formal landscaping and natural bush. It was established on land which had been acquired by the Hawthorn Tramways Trust (later the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board). It was developed as a recreation facility in conjunction with the opening of the electric tram route along Riversdale Road, first to Warrigal Road, then to Elgar Road. The Park remained under the ownership of the M&MTB until 1983, then by its successors, and includes golf and tennis facilities, the chalet, picnic grounds and remnant natural bushland.[208]

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