

## 24 Glen Park Road, Eltham North

### Eltham North Preschool and Infant Welfare Centre

<b>Prepared by:</b> Context	<b>Survey date:</b> December 2020
<b>Place type:</b> Community	<b>Designer:</b> S C Horne, Gordon Ford, Peter Glass
<b>Significance level:</b> Significant	<b>Builder:</b> Not Known
<b>Extent of overlay:</b> To title boundaries	<b>Major construction:</b> 1974



Figure 1. Main entrance to Eltham North Preschool. (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 2. Rear of the Infant Welfare Centre. (Source: Context 2020)

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This place is associated with the following historic themes taken from the *Nillumbik Shire Thematic Environmental History* (2016):

### 8 BUILDING COMMUNITY LIFE

#### 8.2 Educating people

Mills and Westbrooke (2010:5) note the following in relation to baby health centres in the Eltham area:

*The first Baby Health Centre in the region around Eltham was opened at Heidelberg in April 1926. It was funded by Heidelberg City Council and run by the VBHCA. Sub-centres were soon set up in Ivanhoe, Fairfield and Greensborough. The Greensborough centre serviced Greensborough and Diamond Creek in the Heidelberg Shire and it was anticipated that it could also support mothers from Briar Hill, Montmorency, Hurstbridge and Eltham, all in the Eltham Shire. The Greensborough centre operated one day a week from a room in an 1840s hotel building in the main road, known as Marble Hall. By 1933 up to sixteen Eltham residents were using this service at any one time. Up to this point the service had been provided to Eltham residents without a contribution from the Eltham Shire but by 1934 the Eltham Shire Council had been persuaded to provide a £30 annual contribution. A new purpose-built centre was opened at Greensborough in February 1935 (Mill & Westbrooke 2010).*

## LOCALITY HISTORY

Eltham North is located on the country of the Wurundjeri-willam clan of the Woi wurrung people.

Diamond Creek separates Eltham North from Eltham and was the dividing boundary between municipalities; Eltham North was in Heidelberg City and, from 1964, in Diamond Valley Shire. In 2001 Eltham North's western boundary moved from Ryans Road into St Helena. As a result, today Eltham North is located within two local government areas: the City of Banyule and Nillumbik Shire (*Victorian Places* 2015).

Eltham North, originally an outlying rural part of Eltham, became a separate locality with the opening of the Glen Park (later Eltham North) State School No. 4212 in 1924. At the time the locality was known as Glen Park, with that name recorded in street directories until the 1960s. The postal district, however, was Eltham North (*Victorian Places* 2015).

Extensive subdivision to the northeast and northwest of Eltham occurred from the first decades of the twentieth century, although residential development was slow due to an absence of electricity and water services. A new bridge across Diamond Creek, opened in 1915, improved connections between Eltham and Eltham North.

The Eltham and Glen Park Progress Association was formed in 1921 and called for the construction of a railway station at Glen Park (later Eltham North), midway between Eltham and Diamond Creek stations. In 1924, the Glen Park Progress Association expected such a station would service 387 blocks in the Bellevue and Beard estates and 313 blocks in the Glen Park Estate subdivision. Glen Park at this time had 89 houses with a largely working-class population of 198 people. It also had 97 weekenders (Mills & Westbrooke 2017:72).

Glen Park Primary School No. 4212 was subsequently opened after the Progress Association petitioned the Education Department, stating that the population of the area was growing and complaining that children had to walk two to three miles to Eltham or Diamond Creek schools. The



first school opened in May 1924, with 38 pupils, in a private house called 'Rest-a-While' in Lower Glen Park Road, where it operated for the next 17 months. In 1925 it was relocated to a single room transported by wagon from Greensborough and moved to land in Banks Road (Eltham North Primary School 2020; Blake 1973:138). The school's name was changed to Eltham North in that year (Blake 1973:138).

In 1925 a building for the Glen Park Gospel Mission was erected (*Advertiser* 4 December 1925:3).

Local builder Alistair Knox designed and constructed a number of mudbrick houses in the area from the late 1940s, contributing to a style of architecture that became known as the 'Eltham style'.

Reflecting the postwar growth in the area, by 1952 there were 62 children attending the Eltham North State School, and in 1953 a new school building was completed in Wattletree Road (Blake 1973:138).

Today the primary school is in the east of the suburb, adjacent to the Glen Park Gospel Church and local shops. There is a kindergarten in Glen Park Road. Eltham North has numerous bushland reserves and playgrounds (*Victorian Places* 2015).

## PLACE HISTORY

The Eltham North Preschool and Infant Welfare Centre is located on Crown Allotment F, Section 11, Parish of Nillumbik, 57 acres purchased by H Stooke in 1852 (*Nillumbik Parish Plan* 1961). Stooke's allotment was later amalgamated with other nearby allotments and then subdivided into residential lots. The area near Glen Park Road was known as the Glen Park Estate, named after a residential subdivision first established in 1909 (Figure 3); by 1924 the estate comprised 313 blocks (Mills & Westbrooke 2017:72). Because of a lack of services, residential development on the estate was initially slow. The subject building was erected in 1975 on Lots 9, 10 and 11.



Figure 3. Part of plan of subdivision at Glen Park, 1913, with approximate boundaries of the subject property outlined in green (LHS), and an advertisement for the Glen Park Estate in 1909 (RHS). (Source: CT:V3682 F252; Age 13 November 1909:19)

Before the construction of the building, between 1960-61 the Eltham North Baby Health Centre, open on Wednesday afternoons, was located at the Memorial Hall (*Victorian Baby Health Centres Association* 1960-61:44). The baby health centre movement, established to stem the high mortality rate of infants, was founded in Victoria in 1917 and was boosted in 1918 when the Victorian Minister for Health granted a pound for pound subsidy up to £125 to encourage councils to establish baby

health centres. By June 1918 nine centres had opened in Melbourne. The Victorian Baby Health Centres Association (VBHCA) was created in the same year. By 1944, there were over 150 centres in metropolitan and country Victoria (ANMF and VAMCHN 2017).

Preschools or kindergartens, concerned with the education of children, gained popularity during World War II when women were required to work outside the home. Additional creches and kindergartens were subsequently established, especially after 1944 when the Victorian Health Department announced that it would subsidise kindergartens for all children, regardless of their parents' financial status. Together with the work of the Nursery Kindergarten Extension Board, the subsidy led to the proliferation of kindergartens across Melbourne's suburbs in the postwar years (Barnard 2008).

Because of the postwar population increase in the Eltham North area, a centre to house a preschool was planned by the Shire of Diamond Valley. In 1972 the Shire advertised its intention to apply for a \$100,000 loan for permanent works and undertakings; \$7000 of this loan was allocated for the construction of a building for the Eltham North preschool centre (Age 20 December 1972:21).

On 12 December 1973, Alan Scanlan, Minister for Health, wrote to Shire of Diamond Valley deputy shire secretary, W M Balkin, informing him of the minister's support for the construction of a combined preschool and infant welfare centre. He also stated that council was eligible to apply for the maximum grant of \$15,000 on a 2:1 basis for the first preschool unit, and \$7,750 on a 1:1 basis for the second unit, in addition to \$12,000 on a 2:1 basis for the infant welfare centre (PROV 1973, Public Building File).

Designed by architect S C Horne of 83 Wattletree Road, Eltham, plans for the building were submitted to the Department of Health in January 1974 (see Figure 3). WL Meinhardt and Partners were the engineers for the project. The garden for the site was designed by Gordon Ford and Peter Glass (see Figure 4) (PROV 1974, Public Building File).

In April 1974, Horne advertised for builders for the construction of a steel framed, brick veneer combined infant welfare and preschool at Eltham North (Age 6 April 1974:120).

The building was completed by April 1975. Playground equipment, comprising a treehouse and tower, was designed by Charles Hanlin in 1976. A store for playground equipment was built adjoining the rear of the building in 1984 (PROV 1975-84, Public Building File).

As part of a program to remove asbestos cement debris from play area, in 2009 five eucalypt trees were removed from the garden site (BP).

Today the building houses the Eltham North Maternal and Child Health Centre and Eltham North Preschool, a not-for-profit kindergarten run by TRY Children's Services which provides sessional preschool programs for both three-year-old and four-year-old groups.

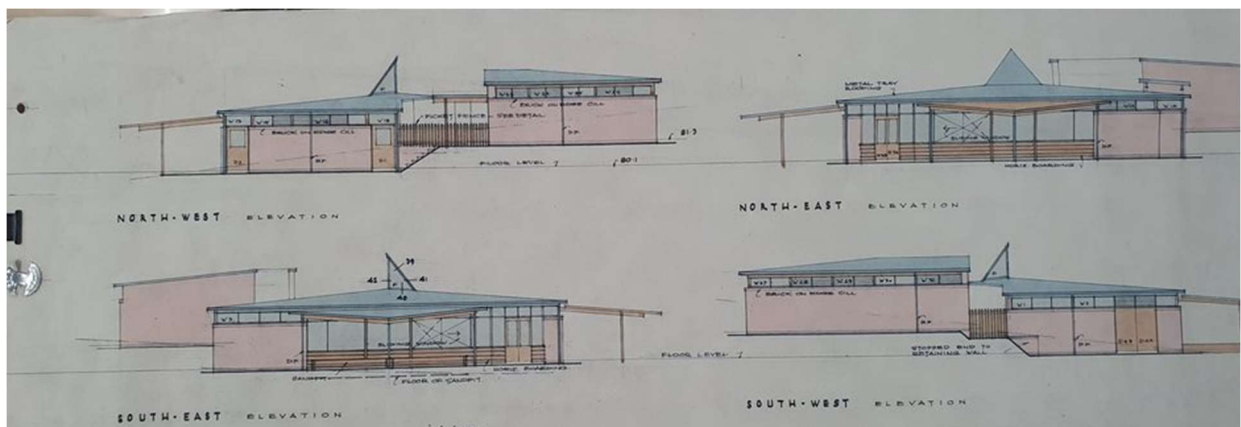
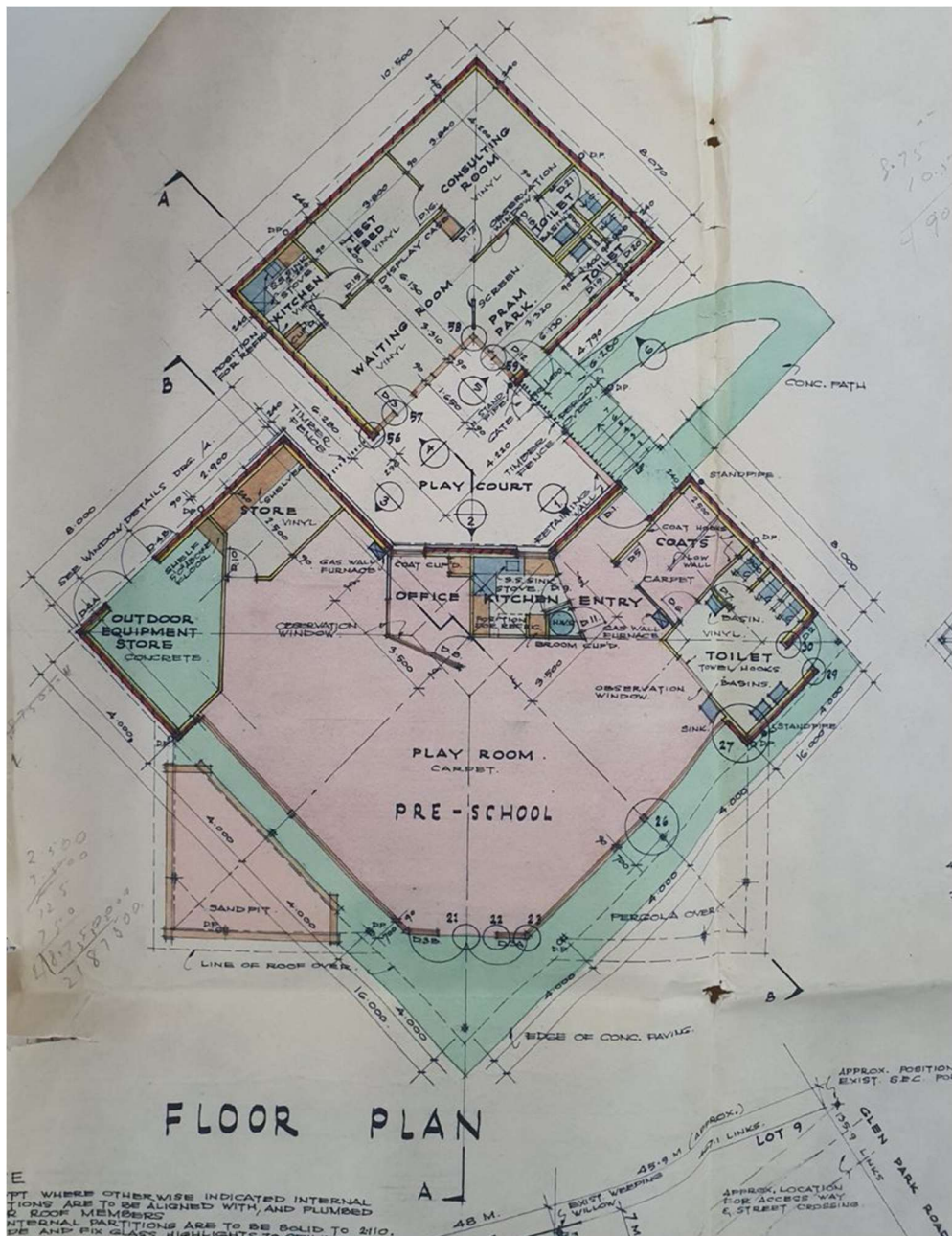


Figure 4. Plans by architect S C Horne for the Eltham North Preschool and Infant Welfare Centre, 1974. (PROV 1974, Public Building File - top and Public Building Plans - bottom).



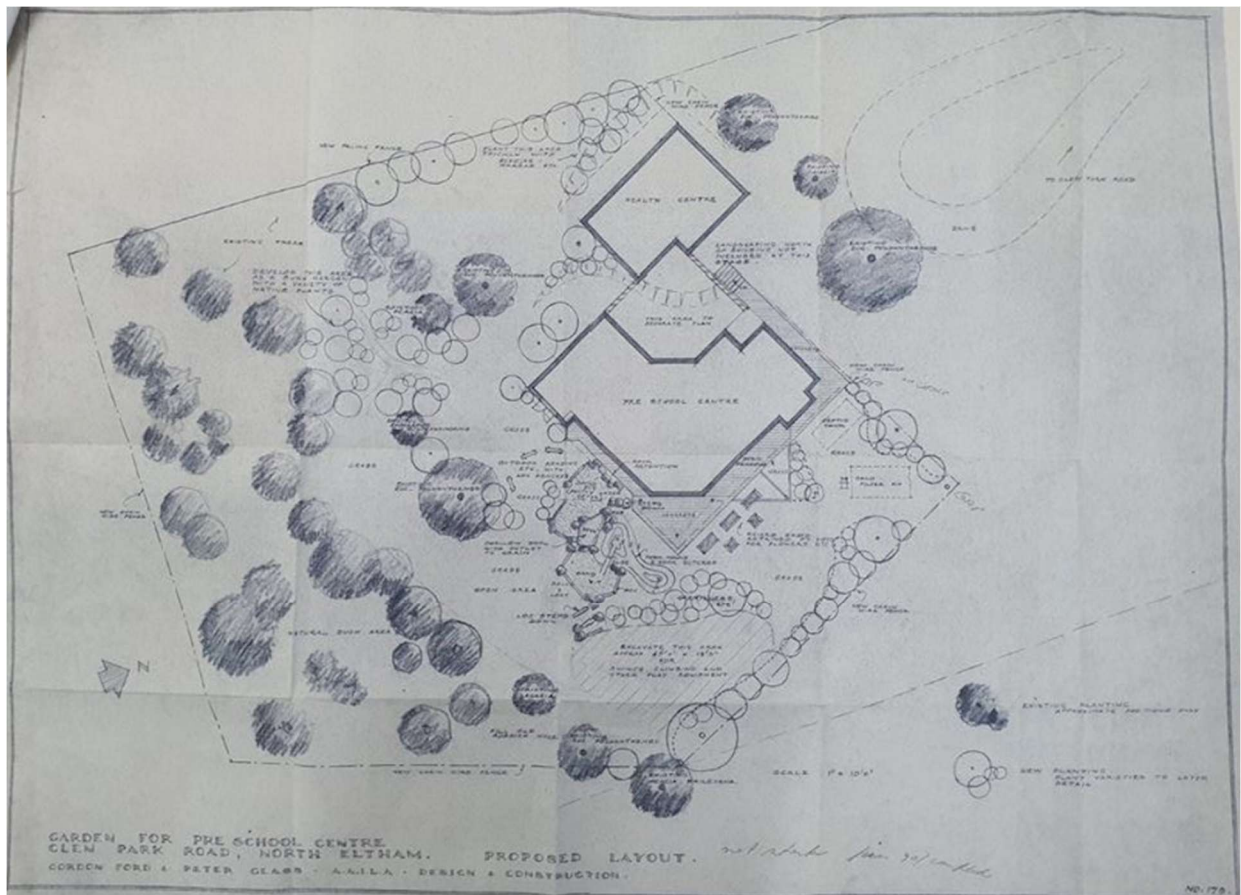


Figure 4. Plan for the proposed layout by landscape designer Gordon Ford and artist, conservationist and landscape architect Peter Glass for the garden at Eltham North Preschool and Infant Welfare Centre, c1973 (PROV c1973, Public Building File).

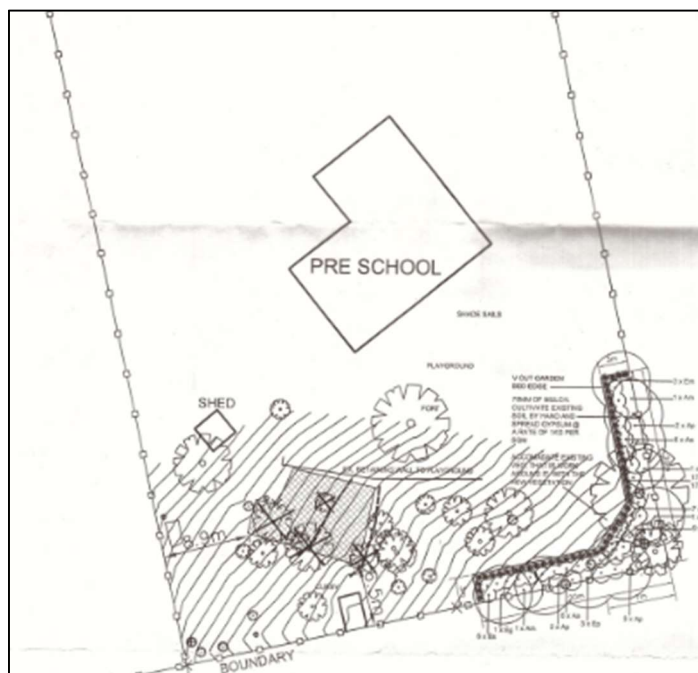


Figure 5. Showing trees to be removed marked with a cross, 2009. (Source:BP)

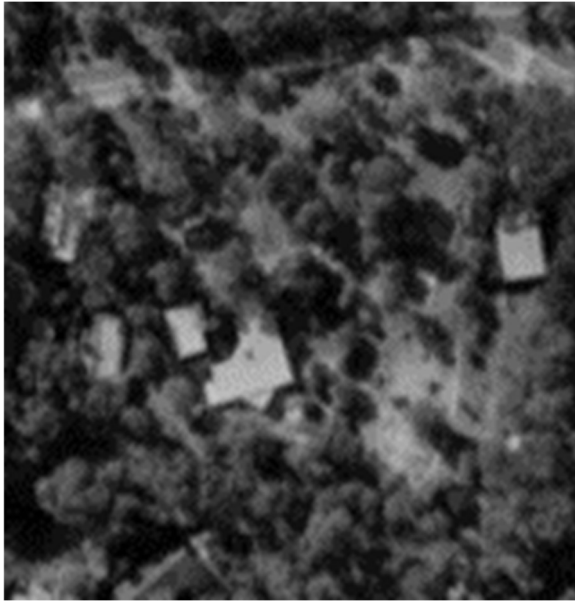


Figure 6. Aerial imagery of the site in 1987 showing the store addition of 1984 (Source: CPO, 'WESTERN PORT FORESHORE' 1987, via Landata)



Figure 7. The building in 2009 showing additional verandahs to the north and east of the preschool pavilion, shade sails, and the earthworks at the south of the site. (Source: Nearmap 2009)

### *Gordon Ford, landscape designer*

Australian landscape designer Gordon Ford (1918-1999) was a pioneer of the natural Australian style of landscape design. Growing up in country New South Wales, he settled in Eltham, Victoria, after World War II. Ford began landscaping work in 1952-54 under noted landscape designer Ellis Stones (1895-1975), before commencing his own landscape company, working in partnership with his Eltham neighbour, landscape architect Peter Glass (1917-1997) in the 1960s and 1970s.

Over his 50-year career Ford became an important landscape designer and constructor. He had a significant influence on the evolution of a natural Australian style from the 1950s, alongside his predecessors and mentor (Edna Walling and Ellis Stones) and peers (Alistair Knox and Peter Glass). Ford, along with Glass and Knox, was instrumental in the foundation of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, established in 1967 (Alistair Knox Foundation).

Ford believed that garden and buildings should form a fully integrated whole, rejecting the notion that a house was simply surrounded by a garden (David Bick cited in Context 2010). Ford favoured Australian native plants, but integral to his design philosophy were spatial considerations (juxtaposing mass and void and concealing boundaries) and foliage texture and shape (Reid 2002:228). He worked on many commissions for domestic gardens, public parks and institutional landscapes. Noted landscape designs include those for his own properties, the Boomerang Residence, 195 Laughing Waters Road, Eltham, c1970 (HO111), and 'Füllung', 76 Pitt Street, Eltham (HO153), as well as the Billabong in the VHR listed Royal Park, Parkville (H2337), and at Monash University.

Ford died at home in 1999.

### *Peter Glass, artist, conservationist and landscape architect*

Peter Glass (1917-1997) was an artist and a trained draftsman who started working for Alistair Knox as a carpenter and mud brick worker in 1948. As the Knox building business expanded, he progressed to working in the drafting office, eventually running the office through the 1960s (Alistair Knox Foundation).

Glass originally came to Eltham with his friends the jazz musicians, Graham and Roger Bell, and landscape designer Gordon Ford. He eventually built a house opposite Ford's in John Street, Eltham, and in the 1960s and 1970s worked in partnership with Ford, formed the firm Peter Glass and Gordon Ford. As landscape designers the pair undertook a number of projects, including the role of landscape architects for Monash University in the 1970s (Alistair Knox Foundation; Age 20 February 1971:27). In his work he was noted for his use of Australian plants. With his wife Cecile, he established a native plant nursery at their Eltham home in the 1960s (Clough 2002:263).

Glass, along with Knox and Ford, was instrumental in the foundation of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, established in 1967. Glass went on to design many gardens, some of which were done in partnership with Knox and Ford (Alistair Knox Foundation). In 1971, Glass, in association with Alistair Knox and Ivan Stranger, provided a plan, free of charge, for the Eltham town park (Age 4 July 1979:26).

Glass, along with Knox and John Harcourt, played a significant role in the development of the 'Eltham style' of architecture and design and were associated with the development of the Australian bush garden aesthetic.

## DESCRIPTION

24 Glen Park Road, Eltham is an Infant Welfare Centre and Preschool built in 1974-5 to a design by SC Horne for the Diamond Valley Shire Council.

The Eltham North Preschool and Infant Welfare Centre, Eltham North is located to the west of a Council reserve on the south side of Glen Park Road, slightly west of Banks Road, and east of Ryans Road. Bounded by Glen Park Road Reserve to the east and surrounded by residential properties to the southern and western boundaries, the building is located at the end of a driveway. The site slopes away to the southeast. An open asphalt carpark accessed from Glen Park Road occupies the northern half of the site. The building sits to the rear of the site, behind the carpark, nestled within its landscape setting. Bush garden style landscaped gardens, and playground equipment surround the building and numerous trees are dotted across the site.

In plan the single-storey building complex has a square footprint with low pyramidal roof, that has had its western corner pulled away to create two pavilions that enclose a central play court. The smaller upper pavilion is located to the west and houses the infant welfare centre, while the larger pavilion, the preschool, sits down-slope to the east comprising the other three quadrants of the footprint.

The building has been cut into the site integrating it with its natural bushland setting. It maintains a low-profile within the streetscape due to its siting towards the rear of the site, positioned downhill from the road and with a low roof profile. The building is enclosed by a recent green loop top aluminium fence with access to both pavilions via a concrete path from the carpark. This path splits as beyond the gate from the carpark, leading down concrete steps to the preschool on the west, and via curved path to the infant welfare centre on the east. Concrete steps connect the two entrances while a brick retaining wall and timber picket fence separates the children's play court from the entrance court.





Figure 8. Aerial imagery showing the footprint of the building, carpark and broader layout of the site. The subject site boundary is outlined in blue. (Source: Nearmap 2020 with Context overlay)



Figure 9. The entrance to the Preschool from the carpark showing the pathways to both pavilions and concrete stairs behind the aluminium fence. (Source: Context 2020)



The building is steel framed with brick veneer walls. The roof is clad in 'Brownbuilt' metal tray roofing. Photovoltaic cells have been added to the roof. Wide eaves and deep timber fascias create an emphatically horizontal band around the building. Verandahs are supported by simple timber posts. External walls are clad in textured brown brick. The material palette is soft, in harmony with the bush aesthetic.



Figure 10. View of the building from the carpark. (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 11. Entrance pathway to the infant welfare pavilion with picket fence and staircase in the background. (Source: Context 2020)

The infant welfare pavilion is small and compact with rooms designed for consultation. A skillion awning supported by simple square columns sits above the main entrance door. Glass louvred clerestory windows extend around the rear of the pavilion receiving natural light and maintaining privacy within.



Figure 12. View of the infant welfare pavilion entrance from the carpark. (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 13. Rear of the infant welfare pavilion showing clerestory windows and a double hung window. (Source: Context 2020)

The entrance to the preschool building is emphasised by a small gable set above a skillion roofed verandah extension clad in corrugated iron (Figure 14). This verandah provides weather protection to the building entry. A glazed triangular skylight in the centre of the building, acts as an architectural accent and allows light into the preschool room.

The preschool pavilion is larger and consists of a centralised playroom flanked by service areas, stores, kitchen and toilets to the north, west and south. The main playroom windows face towards the east and south. Extensive glazing facing the playground reflects the the need for surveillance of the playground, and allows ample light into the main playroom area. Clerestory windows line continue around the façade. Services and storage areas are located to the sides. The triangular pergola extending to the south is original (Figure 15) and the rectangular verandah with corrugated iron cladding extending to the east is a later addition.



Figure 14. Small gable at main preschool entrance set above a skillion roofed verandah extension clad in corrugated iron. (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 15. Triangular pergola just visible behind the shade sails. (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 16. Sandpit and verandah on the eastern side of the building. (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 17. Detail of the glass louvred clerestory windows on the eastern side of the preschool (Source: Context 2020)

Landscape elements reflect the natural Australian landscape aesthetic championed by designers Gordon Ford and Peter Glass. Key landscape elements retained from the original layout concept by Ford and Glass prepared for the site include the overall natural aesthetic to the landscaping, boulders, and log steps. The original layout included a sand pit, but in a more organic form than the extant rectangular sand pit. More contemporary playground equipment includes the fort structure with green slide.





Figure 18. View of the playground towards the building showing boulders and log steps. (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 19. Window wall at the southern corner of the southern façade. (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 20. Playground to the south of the site. (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 21. Playground to the south the site showing sensitively placed boulders. (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 22. Garden beds beside the path the the main preschool entrance. (Source: Context 2020)



Figure 23. There are several substantial trees throughout the site. (Source: Context 2020)

## INTEGRITY

The building at 24 Glen Park Road, Eltham is largely intact with limited changes visible to original or early significant fabric. The building retains its low-profile, soft material palette, bush aesthetic, built form, materiality and scale.

The exterior of the building is largely intact and has a high level of integrity. It has very few changes visible to original or early elements. The building retains its original built form, roof form, and openings, and continuous use as an infant welfare centre and preschool. Original details include the external cladding, windows and doors, the protruding triangular skylight and triangular pergola. Additional verandahs, shade awnings and photovoltaic roof cells do not detract from the integrity of the place.

The integrity of the place is greatly enhanced by its landscape setting, specifically the relationship to the contouring of the site and integration of the building with the surrounding playground layout originally designed by Gordon Ford and Peter Glass. Although the landscape has changed overtime, it retains essential features of the original including the natural bushland character, original boulders carefully sited and integrated into sloped parts of the site, and the log steps.

Overall, the building and landscape setting have relatively high integrity.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The Shire of Nillumbik contains a number of community facilities and preschools of which a few postwar examples are on the Heritage Overlay. These include the Eltham South Kindergarten, 35 Fordhams Road, Eltham, 1965 (HO202); the Eltham Community Centre, 801 Main Road, Eltham, 1977-78 (HO117); and the Eltham Library 4-10 Panther Place, Eltham, c1992 (HO239).

The place descriptions below are taken directly from Hermes.



Eltham South Kindergarten, 35 Fordhams Road, Eltham (HO202). (Source: HERMES)

Built c1970s, the Eltham South Kindergarten is crowned by its large and unique roof-top sculpture; this building is a good example of The Eltham idiom of design during the 1960's, 1970's. Features of the refined design include the triangular floor plan, quite steeply pitched slate roof, eaves, open eastern end, timber windows and the use of second-hand bricks.

The Eltham North preschool and infant welfare centre at 24 Glen Park Road Eltham compares well to Eltham South Kindergarten. Whilst Eltham South Kindergarten displays a higher degree of architectural detailing and aesthetic finesse, a similar geometric interest is expressed. The broad horizontality, material palette and depiction of organic principles in a non-residential context is evident.



Given the lack of comparable examples of postwar community facilities and preschools currently in the Nillumbik schedule to the Heritage Overlay, comparative examples have been selected from outside of the Shire of Nillumbik.

Comparable postwar examples of combined preschool and infant welfare buildings include:



Olive Phillips Free Kindergarten and Beaumaris Maternal and Child Health Centre (formerly Beaumaris Infant Welfare Centre) (Interim HO785, City of Bayside). (Source: HERMES)

The Olive Phillips Free Kindergarten and infant welfare centre is a single-storey concrete block building, expressed as two attached pyramid-roofed pavilions with a connecting flat-roofed breezeway. Erected in 1974 to replace an original community building destroyed by fire, the new centre was designed by local architect David Godsell.



Beaumaris Playhouse and Jack and Jill Kindergarten, 24 & 26 Grandview Avenue, Beaumaris (Interim HO787 City of Bayside). (Source: HERMES)

The Beaumaris Playhouse and Jack and Jill Kindergarten, built between 1966-68 to the design of Berg and Alexandra and in 1958 to the design of Douglas Alexandra, respectively, are significant.

Significant elements include:

- the original built form, scale and planned aspects of each of the buildings;
- the large window-wall to the playroom (including sliding doors and coloured glass and cross-bracing details to the end bays), vertical timber cladding, original doors and windows and covered entry porch of the Jack and Jill Kindergarten;
- the flat roof and roof lantern, timber lined eaves and splayed fascia, vertical timber lining to porches and porch ceilings and original doors and windows of the Beaumaris Playhouse.

## Discussion

While 24 Glen Park Road, Eltham North is a simpler building than the examples listed, it demonstrates the simple forms, lightweight construction, natural material palette, broad horizontality and bush aesthetic typical of community building design in the postwar period. The functionality of the

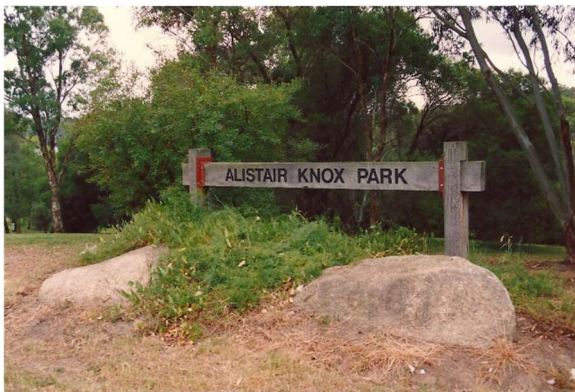


kindergarten building is reflected in its form which creates a protected inner world for the young children for which it was designed. This is a world that interfaces freely with the outdoor setting. Paired with the kindergarten, the infant welfare centre displays through its more enclosed form the privacy required for consultation. The low profile of the building elements and their integration of the landscape design expresses a holistic design approach to early childhood education. The building form is directly related to its function. Stylistically the building shows elements of postwar geometric design principles but is primarily driven by functional requirements. The functionalism expressed in the design of the building has connotations of lightness and hygiene, and child development ambitions. This reflects the melding of architectural and social agendas.

24 Glen Park Road, Eltham North is also notable for the evidence it retains of a landscape design ethos that emerged in postwar Australia, and particularly in Eltham where it is known as the 'Eltham style'. The 'Eltham style' incorporated 'visual and experiential references to Australian natural landscapes that went beyond mere reference to Australian flora' (Saniga 2012:105). Inspired by prominent landscape designer Ellis Stones (1875-1975), Ford and Glass, with environmental architect Alistair Knox, were at the forefront in developing this style of landscape design which sought to translate the character of Australian rural landscapes into suburban and city settings.

The Shire of Nillumbik contains a number of gardens and landscapes designed with a natural Australian landscape aesthetic on the Heritage Overlay. These include Alistair Knox Park, corner Bridge Street and Main Road, Eltham, c1973-75 (HO14), Boomerang Residence, 195 Laughing Waters Road, Eltham, c1970 (HO111), the Coller House, 185 Mount Pleasant Road, Eltham, c1975 (HO136), and 'Füllung', 76 Pitt Street, Eltham, from 1945-99 (HO153).

Place descriptions are taken directly from HERMES.



Alistair Knox Park, corner Bridge Street and Main Road, Eltham, c1973-75 (HO14). (Source: HERMES)

The park and the lake are historically significant because they were designed by four of the major forces in the urban bush landscape movement: Gordon Ford, Peter Glass, Alistair Knox and Ivan Stranger. The park is historically and aesthetically significant because it contains a number of features that are associated with the urban bush landscape movement - these include the informal planting of Australian native species in an open and undulating grassed setting and the attempt to blend the man-made landscape of the park with the natural environs of the Diamond Creek to the park's west. The lake has also been carefully designed to integrate with the park; its perimeter, constructed from a set of large, flattish stones, is characteristic of other designs by members of the urban bush landscape movement. Socially, the park is now a vital part of Eltham's urban fabric and contributes to the quality of life in the central area of the township.



Boomerang Residence, 195 Laughing Waters Road, Eltham, c1970 (HO111). (Source: HERMES)

The property is aesthetically significant as a collection of buildings, landscape elements and infrastructure set amongst a protected bushland setting, which illustrate several characteristics of 'Eltham style' architecture including the use of mud brick and recycled materials, construction in stages, close involvement of the owner in the process, rock and water feature landscaping by Gordon Ford and metal windows crafted by local artist Matcham Skipper. The fountain and rock wall adjacent to Birrarung is aesthetically significant as an example of Gordon Ford's landscape design with the key water feature and carefully placed rocks and boulders fitted into the bush landscape.



Coller House, 185 Mount Pleasant Road, Eltham, c1975 (HO136). (Source: HERMES)

The house is architecturally significant as a good example of a 1970s 'Eltham style' house and as a definitive example of Knox's theory of integration between built structures and natural, or recreated, bushland settings.



'Füllung', 76 Pitt Street, Eltham, from 1945-99 (HO153). (Source: HERMES)

The garden is historically significant because it was designed by the noted landscape designer, Gordon Ford, who went on to have an enormous influence on the development of an Australian bush garden aesthetic. The garden is also significant because Ford was associated with a number of other prominent designers, who worked in the Shire - John Harcourt, Alistair Knox and Peter Glass-all of whom played a significant role in the development of the 'Eltham style' of architecture and design and were associated with the development of the Australian bush garden aesthetic. The garden also reveals the influence of other Australian landscape designers, including Ellis Stones (for whom Ford worked at one stage) and Edna Walling. The garden is historically and aesthetically significant because it epitomises the 'Eltham style' of design (with the garden and buildings designed together to form an integrated whole) and encapsulates the major themes and trends of Australian garden design in the 20th century.

The majority of landscape examples above were built in the mid-1970s, like the subject site. Boomerang residence and Füllung differ in that they were commenced earlier and, as places where Ford resided over longer periods, evolved over much longer time frames. They all display a landscape aesthetic and other elements that are characteristic of a so-called 'Eltham style', pioneered by Ellis Stones, Alistair Knox, Gordon Ford and Peter Glass, among others. Typical elements of Gordon Ford and Peter Glass's garden designs included an overarching natural aesthetic, predominantly (but not exclusively) Australian native plants (often incorporating existing native vegetation on the site), natural materials (brick, red gum sleepers, logs, large boulders), water, and the skilful arrangement and placement of large boulders in the landscape.

Both Füllung and Birrarung include rock and water feature landscaping, which is not present at the subject site, although carefully placed rocks and boulders integrated into the bush landscape were a part of the original layout concept and are extant.

Unlike the residential examples, the garden setting at the Eltham North Preschool and Infant Welfare Centre appears to have changed over time, most likely as features or materials have worn through high use or have been changed to meet changing standards and requirements for ongoing use by young children.

Although not intact, the original relationship with the building and use of the garden have been retained, and the garden setting retains essential attributes of the original, including the natural bushland aesthetic and several large boulders.



## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT?

The Eltham North Preschool and Infant Welfare Centre at 24 Glen Park Road, Eltham North, a preschool and infant welfare centre designed by SC Horne in 1974, and the surrounding landscape setting designed by Gordon Ford and Peter Glass, is significant.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

- the original single storey building complex that consists of two pavilions;
- geometric form and low profile roof, triangular pergola;
- brick construction and roof cladding;
- window and door openings;
- the relationship of the building's two pavilions surrounding the courtyard and integrated setting of the building within the topography of its immediate setting;
- the natural Australian landscape aesthetic of the garden setting; and
- large boulders.

Non-original materials that replicate or are in-keeping with the original or early design intent are of Contributory significance and include:

- mature Australian native trees and shrubs;
- newer bush style playground fabric, such as log seating and log stepping 'stones'; and
- newer wooden structures that support the continued original use.

Additional verandah structures, shade cloth structures, playground equipment, safety equipment, loop fencing are not significant.

### HOW IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

The Eltham North Preschool and Infant Welfare Centre at 24 Glen Park Road, Eltham North, is of local historic, representative, aesthetic, associative and social significance to the Shire of Nillumbik.

### WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

The Eltham North Preschool and Infant Welfare Centre at 24 Glen Park Road, Eltham, is of historical significance for its demonstration of the evolution of infant welfare and preschool education in the suburbs of Nillumbik in the mid-twentieth century. The design reflects the development in the design of kindergartens and infant welfare facilities that occurred from the late 1960s. These were developments that were informed by evolving ideas in early childhood development. The creation of an internalised and protected playroom set deep within a landscaped environment reflects an increasingly child-centred focus. (Criterion A)

The setting of the Eltham North Preschool and Infant Welfare Centre, including its natural Australian landscape aesthetic and large boulders, designed by prominent landscape designer Gordon Ford and artist, conservationist and landscape architect Peter Glass is significant. It evidences the distinctive landscape design ethos that emerged in the postwar decades in Eltham, known as the so-called 'Eltham style', pioneered by Ford and Glass along with Alistair Knox, and Ellis Stones before them. The Eltham North Preschool and Infant Welfare Centre is also significant as an example of the

postwar bush style 'Eltham style' architecture. the building planning, with its functional planning and direct connection with outdoor play spaces, reflects the child development principles that emerged in the 1960s and early 1970s. The separate but aligned programmatic functions of preschool and infant welfare are formally expressed in the arrangement of the two pavilions. (Criterion D)

The design and layout of the playground by prominent landscape designer Gordon Ford is aesthetically significant for its demonstration of the distinctive bush-style for which Ford was well known. (Criterion E)

The Infant Welfare Centre and North Eltham Preschool is of social significance for its long and continuing association with the free kindergarten movement and maternal and child health care to the local community since it was first established on the site in 1974. Similarly, it is socially significant for the provision of a community run kindergarten and Council-run infant welfare services on the subject site since 1974. The close spatial arrangement of these two community uses reflects their social alignment and a growing social appreciation of the functional concerns of families with young children living in the suburbs of Nillumbik in the 1970s (Criterion G)

The Infant Welfare Centre and North Eltham Preschool has associative significance for its associations with landscape designers Gordon Ford and Peter Glass who were key proponents of the Australian bush garden aesthetic. (Criterion H)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended for inclusion in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Nillumbik Planning Scheme as an Individually Significant place.

**Extent of overlay:** To title boundaries

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Nillumbik Planning Scheme:

### Nillumbik Planning Scheme

External paint controls	No
Internal alteration controls	No
Tree controls	No
Outbuildings or fences	No
To be included on the Victorian Heritage Register	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted	No
Aboriginal heritage place	No

### Other

N/A



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