HO97 – Muswell, 9-11 Synnot Street, Werribee

Heritage Place: Muswell	**HO Reference:** HO97 **Date updated:** 15 October 2026
Address: 9-11 Synnot Street, Werribee	



Figure 1. Muswell, 9-11 Synnot Street, Werribee. *Source:* realestate.com.au. 2025. '9-11 Synnot Street, Werribee, Vic 3035.' Realestate.com.au (website). https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-werribee-146361308

Item Group: Residential buildings (private) **Item Type:** House	**Key Theme:** Housing the population **Key Sub-theme:** Interwar
Designer: Oakley and Parkes (unverified) **Builder:** Unknown	**Construction:** c.1930 **Style:** Interwar Spanish Mission
Significance Level: Local	
Recommendation: Update schedule to indicate that internal alteration controls do not apply. Apply outbuilding and fence controls. Remove tree controls.	

Controls:	○	External paint controls	○	Internal alteration controls	○	Tree controls
	○	Included on Victorian Heritage Register	○	Incorporated Plans	●	Outbuildings and fence not exempt (Front fence, gates and garden walls)
	○	Prohibited uses may be permitted	○	Aboriginal Heritage Place	●	Solar energy system controls

Curtilage



Figure 2. Muswell, 9-11 Synnot Street, Werribee. *Basemap source*: Nearmap. 2025. Spatial data source: VicMap & Department of Transport and Planning

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	*Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history*	Muswell is of historical significance as an interwar residence, established during a period of residential expansion in Werribee driven by favourable state-level economic conditions and the success of local farming activities. While most residential development from this era comprised modest, single-storey masonry houses, the period also saw the construction of several prominent homes for more affluent members of the community, typically located on the south side of the railway line. Constructed during this time, Muswell reflects the broader patterns of suburban expansion and social stratification in interwar Werribee. It stands as a tangible example of domestic architecture associated with this period of growth and offers insight into Werribee's consolidation as a suburb.
B	*Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history*	This place does not meet this criterion.
C	*Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history*	This place does not meet this criterion.
D	*Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments*	This place does not meet this criterion.
E	*Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics*	Muswell is of aesthetic significance as an example of the Spanish Mission style in a domestic application. The style is evident in the arcaded porte cochere, use of Cordova tiles, arched windows, and a light render. The inclusion of the garage and associated garden walls and detailing maintain the Spanish Mission expression furthering an appreciation of the cohesiveness of the design. Muswell is one of the few examples of Spanish Mission in the region.
F	*Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period*	This place does not meet this criterion.

G	*Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions*	This place does not meet this criterion.
H	*Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.*	Muswell has a strong association with Dr Charles Prouse, the second owner of the property, and a notable doctor in the community. During Dr Prouse's ownership of Muswell he established a medical practice which operated from the premises and made a strong contribution to the public health system in Werribee.

Statement of Significance – Muswell, 9-11 Synnot Street, Werribee

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Figure 3. Muswell, 9-11 Synnot Street, Werribee. Realestate.com.au. 2025. '9-11 Synnot Street, Werribee, Vic 3035.' Realestate.com.au (website). https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-werribee-146361308

What is significant?

The whole of the place including the dwelling, circular drive, garden walls, front fence and gates, is significant.

How is it significant?

Muswell is of historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Wyndham. Muswell is also significant for its associations with Dr Charles Prouse.

Why is it significant?

Muswell is of historical significance as an interwar residence, established during a period of residential expansion in Werribee driven by favourable state-level economic conditions and the success of local farming activities. While most residential development from this era comprised modest, single-storey masonry houses, the period also saw the construction of several prominent homes for more affluent members of the community, typically located on the south side of the railway line. Constructed during this time, Muswell reflects the broader patterns of suburban expansion and social stratification in interwar Werribee. It stands as a tangible example of domestic architecture associated with this period of growth and offers insight into Werribee's consolidation as a suburb. (Criterion A)

Muswell is of aesthetic significance as an example of the Spanish Mission style in a domestic application. The style is evident in the arcaded porte cochere, use of Cordova tiles, arched windows, and a light render. The inclusion of the garage and associated garden walls and detailing maintain the Spanish Mission expression furthering an appreciation of the cohesiveness of the design. Muswell is one of the few examples of Spanish Mission in the region. (Criterion E)

Muswell has a strong association with Dr Charles Prouse, the second owner of the property, and a notable doctor in the community. During Dr Prouse's ownership of Muswell he established a medical practice which operated from the premises and made a strong contribution to the public health system in Werribee (Criterion H)

Primary Source

Muswell citation, Extent Heritage, 2026.

Description

Bunurong Country

Muswell is situated on the lands of the Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of Country. Despite the effects of colonisation, including dispossession of land, the Traditional Custodians have maintained a continuing connection to land, waters and culture within the City of Wyndham.

Physical Analysis

Muswell is a two-storey residence constructed in the 1930s in the Spanish Mission style with clinker brick base, and a smoothly rendered and painted façade. The house is located towards the rear of the property. A low brick fence delineates between Synnot Street and the property. Behind this, large trees and dense vegetation visually obstruct the view into the property. A circular drive curves around an open garden and through the porte cochere.

The dwelling has a hipped roof clad in Cordova tiles with a chimney located at the western end of the dwelling. As it presents to Synnot Street, the front elevation adopts a largely symmetrical composition with two forward projecting bays. The easternmost bay consists of a gable roof, while the westernmost has an overhanging eave either side of a porte cochere with a balcony above. The porte cochere includes three arched openings to the north elevation and a recessed entry with a slightly elevated front step, forming a loggia representative of Spanish Mission style. The porte cochere includes Cordova tiling as wall capping and features panels of stacked Cordova tiles surrounded by rendered masonry. The porte cochere adopts the same clinker brick base seen on the main house. The upper level of the porte cochere is exposed. The lightly coloured render is typical of the Spanish Mission style, which attempted to emulate the warmer tonal palettes common to the architecture of Spain, Italy and the south of France (Raworth 1991, 17). Fenestration across the dwelling comprises multipaned windows of varying heights and shapes, including some arched windows. The upper level sash windows on the front bays include metal Juliette balconies. While the existing dwelling does not have shutters, evidence of the shutters can be seen in the shutter tie backs located on the façade.

To the rear of the dwelling, on the east side, is a single storey wing comprising a garage and shed. This shed was designed in the same style of the house and had been constructed by 1951. To the south-west corner of the dwelling is a single storey addition comprising large floor to ceiling windows, and a flat roof.

The garden includes mature trees, boundary plantings and retains the circular drive. Garden walls which are constructed of rendered masonry with Cordova tile capping, including those adjoining the dwelling have been retained in full. Part of these garden walls include an extent to the east of the dwelling which previously retained a pair of gates over the extended driveway into the garage. The circular drive is constructed of concrete and separated from the lawn and garden by small concrete curved edging. The garden consists of large areas of open grass with boundary plantings. Some mature trees planted in the post-war era remain in the garden, including ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*) a mature Canary Island date palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) and peppercorn trees (*Schinus molle*). The remnants of a fountain remain in the front setback, marked by circular arrangement of stones within the lawn.

The property is set behind a low rise clinker brick fence with metal gates at either end of the fence over the driveway access. The fence and gates appear to be original to the dwelling. The early concrete driveway strips remain evident although the central strip has been infilled.

Alterations and Additions

- Single storey addition to the rear.*
- New landscaping including later tree plantings to the front setback and along the east and west boundary.*

The property is in good condition and overall is of high integrity.

**** Denotes element that does not contribute to the cultural significance of the place.***

History

Muswell, located at 9-11 Synnot Street, Werribee, is situated on the lands of the Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of Country. Despite the effects of colonisation, including dispossession of land, the Traditional Custodians have maintained a continuing connection to land, waters and culture within the City of Wyndham

This place is located close to Wirribi Yaluk. This is the Bunurong name for the waterway we now know as Werribee River. Wirribi Yaluk is a predominant feature of this Country, carving its way through these plains as it flows from its headwaters north of Ballan into the saltwater of Naarm (the Bunurong word for Port Phillip Bay). It is also the border between the lands of Bunurong and Wadawurrung peoples (BLCAC 2026, 11).

Bunurong peoples are the Traditional Owners of this Country, and Wirribi Yaluk is a place of sustenance, abundance and community. The majestic River red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) growing along its banks have provided bark for containers and canoes, while the river's waters have sustained nutritious crustaceans and fish, including the Short-finned eel (*Anguilla australis*), and have supplied fresh water throughout the year. (BLCAC 2026, 11).

The early township of Werribee was positioned in proximity to a ford over Werribee River, connecting the route between Melbourne and Geelong (Murray 1974, 11; Lovell Chen 2024, 51). As traffic grew along the Melbourne to Geelong route, the Werribee settlement expanded. In 1849, land was reserved for a township and was gazetted as 'Wyndham' in 1850, commencing sale of Crown Land shortly after (James and Pritchard 2008, 15; Hocking 2013, 177; Murray 1974, 14).

The arrival of the railway in 1857 firmly positioned the commercial centre on the east side of the river. A post office, churches, schools and additional inns soon followed (James and Pritchard 2008, 103). While the township itself changed little throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, the surrounding land prospered economically under sheep and cattle grazing (Werribee Shire Banner 29 July 1937, 3). Closer Settlement of the 1890s through until the 1930s marked a turning point, where large estates were subdivided for cropping and other industries, driving an increase in population and transforming land use (Lovell Chen 2024, 15; James and Pritchard 2008, 49; Penrose 2001, 9).

Beginning in the interwar period with the soldier settlement schemes, then increasing significantly in the post-war period with the wave of European migration, Werribee transformed from a semi-rural township to an expansive and populous suburb of Melbourne over the latter half of the twentieth century (Lovell Chen 2024, 48 & 138).

Place History

The site that now comprises Muswell was formerly part of a larger triangular portion of land situated within the early Wyndham township area. It was initially portioned into three regular allotments (Department of Crown Lands and Survey 1880). By c.1900, it was noted that Phillip Joseph Nolan was the owner of the two northern allotments, which had been amalgamated into Allotment 25 (Figure 4). Phillip Nolan was the Werribee Shire Secretary in the late 1800s.

Following the passing of Nolan, in 1912, an article described the sale of "three 'splendid' building allotments in the eastern portion of the township" which were part of P.J. Nolan's estate (Werribee Shire Banner 1912, 2). It is unclear if the site of Muswell was constructed on one of these large allotments, or if further subdivisions occurred before its construction. Aerial imagery from 1951 shows that the broader property of Muswell may have initially included the adjoining site to the west (Figure 5). This land was developed in the decades proceeding.

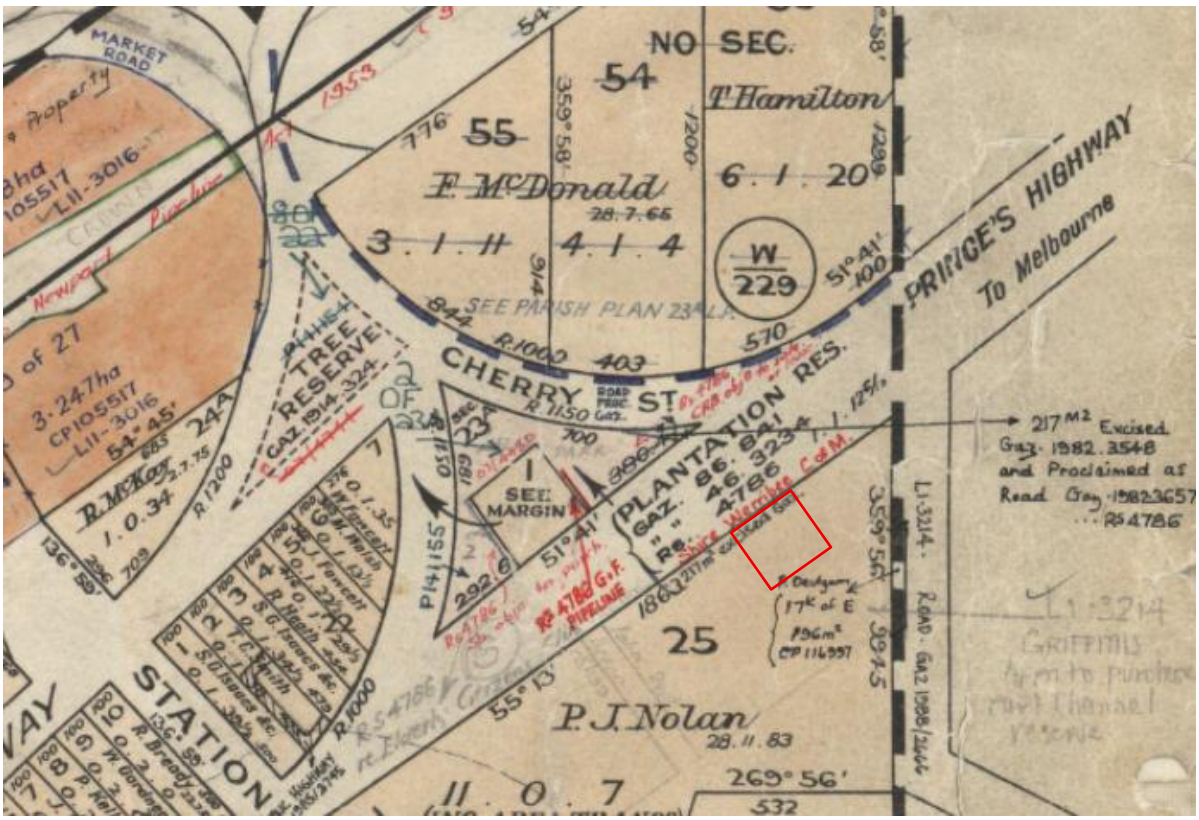


Figure 4. Extract from 1954 Parish Plan, showing allotment 25 with the site of Muswell at 9-11 Synnot Street approximately indicated by red square. *Source:* Department of Lands and Survey. 1954. *Werribee Township Plan.* Digitised cartographic material. Public Record Office Victoria (online database). https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/06B4EA92-F442-11EA-BE8C-890B1FA715B8/about

Construction and Ownership

Muswell was constructed in c.1930 for Claude Creed, a local stud farmer (Context 1997, 322). The residence is said to have been designed by prolific architects Oakley and Parkes, as it poses a striking resemblance to 'The Lodge', which was also designed by Oakley and Parkes in 1926 as a temporary residence for the Prime Minister in Canberra (Goad and Willis 2012, 510). While this has been alluded to, no primary evidence of this connection has been established.

Creed owned a stud farm on Kay Road in Werribee South named 'Muswell Stud Farm' (Werribee Shire Banner 1938, 2) and it is likely that this is where the residence's name 'Muswell' was derived. This stud farm included 68 acres of lucerne and pasture land, as well as an orchard (Werribee Shire Banner 11 August 1938, 2) and was recognised as "one of the best and most

fertile farms in the irrigation settlement" (Werribee Shire Banner 1938, 2). Creed retired from farming offering up the sale of his land and stud herd in 1938 (The Argus 1938, 21).



Figure 5. Aerial photograph of Werribee in 1951, with Muswell at 9-11 Synnot Street indicated with red square. *Source:* Landata (digitised image database).

On 3 July 1943, Creed's Werribee dwelling Muswell was listed for auction in the Werribee Shire Banner as an "Architect Built, Modern 2-Storey Brick Residence (Cordova Tiled)" (Werribee Shire Banner 24 June 1943, 3). The property was then sold to Dr Charles Henry Prouse in 1943 for the sum of £4,450 (Werribee Shire Banner 1943, 3). Dr Prouse was a renowned local physician who worked as the district health officer in the 1930s (The Argus 1932, 19). He had previously occupied a residence in Cherry Street (Context 1997 322), however the purchase of Muswell allowed him to live in the residence with his wife and children whilst conducting his surgery practice out of the dwelling. Dr Charles Prouse as a notable and longstanding doctor in the community initially operating out of the Wandene Hospital and, following its closure, from a practice within Muswell maintaining business in the community well into the latter half of the twentieth century. As a local doctor and Medical Officer of Health for the Shire of Werribee Council, Dr Prouse was responsible for the delivery of many children in Werribee, with the Maternal and Child Health Centre and kindergarten having been named in his honour.

Muswell has continued to be occupied as a private residence, with the building form, Spanish Mission features and its semi-circular driveway arrangement retained (Figure 6 and Figure 7). Various proposals in the twenty-first century have sought to develop the site for commercial use, but this has not been realised.



Figure 6. Photograph of Muswell, 9-11 Synnot Street, Werribee, looking southeast from the driveway. *Source:* Strong, Bill. 2008. *20080721_0455 the Little House - Werribee.* Photograph. Flickr. https://www.flickr.com/photos/87791108@N00/2693839295/in/dateposted/



Figure 7. Photograph of Muswell in 2005, showing the surrounding landscaping to the west and rear. *Source:* realestate.com.au. 2025. '9-11 Synnot Street, Werribee, Vic 3035.' *Realestate.com.au* (online real estate database. https://www.realestate.com.au/sold/property-house-vic-werribee-146361308

Comparative Analysis

Constructed in the c.1930s to accommodate a growing population during a period of economic optimism and suburban expansion, Muswell reflects broader patterns of residential development in Werribee during the interwar period, which saw the establishment of freestanding single-storey interwar homes, as well as several substantial architect designed homes for affluent members of the community. These latter dwellings were typically located on the south side of the railway line and drew upon the prevailing stylistic eclecticism of the interwar period. Comparable examples associated with this period of development include:

Shirwal Court (HO32)

Muswell is comparable to Shirwal Court, Werribee as an example of an architecturally designed two-storey residence constructed in the Interwar period. Muswell presents as a more modest residence which is likely as a result of its location in the centre of town and the comparative largesse spent upon the residences constructed for the Carter family. Both properties demonstrate a refinement of their respective architectural styles and retain a high level of intactness.

Monleisha (HO89)

Muswell is similarly comparable to Monleisha, Werribee, another property constructed in the Interwar period for the Carter family. As with Muswell, Monleisha demonstrates a refined architectural expression which remains largely intact to its original presentation. Similarly, both properties were constructed by farmers from their generated wealth, however Muswell presents as a more modest dwelling when compared to Monleisha.

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Images

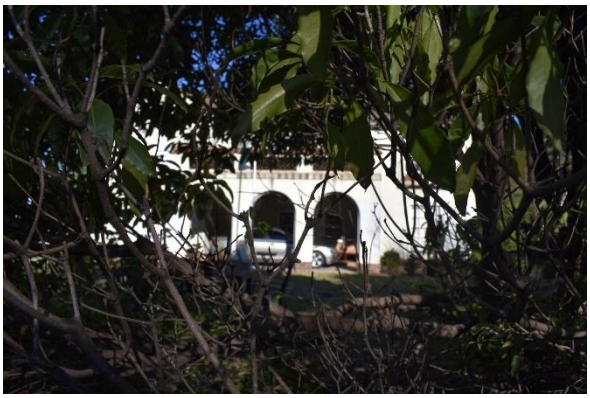


Figure 8. View of front façade, looking through dense boundary foliage from Synnot Street. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 9. Eastern bay of the front façade, looking through dense boundary foliage from Synnot Street. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 10. View of the east entry driveway, looking south from Synnot Street. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 11. Overview of front fencing and boundary plantings, looking southwest along Synnot Street. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 12. Oblique view of the east extent of the front façade, partially obscured by garden plantings. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 13. Large European Ash tree (Fraxinus excelsior) to the front setback of Muswell. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.