HO32 – Shirwal Court, 35-39 Deutgam Street, Werribee

Heritage Place: Shirwal Court	**HO Reference:** HO32 **Date updated:** 15 October 2026

Address: 35-39 Deutgam Street, Werribee



Figure 1. Shirwal Court, 35-39 Deutgam Street, Werribee. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.

Item Group: Residential buildings (private) **Item Type:** House	**Key Theme:** Housing the population **Key Sub-theme:** Interwar housing
Designer: Arthur Pretty **Builder:** Unknown	**Construction:** 1937 **Style:** Interwar (Georgian Revival & Streamline Moderne)

Significance Level: Local

Recommendation: Update the schedule to note that external paint controls and internal alteration controls do not apply. Apply outbuilding and fence controls. Update place name. Retain tree controls. Retain solar energy controls.

Controls:	○	External paint controls	○	Internal alteration controls	●	Tree controls

						Monterey Cypress (Cupressus macrocarpa) and Leyland Cypress (*Cupressus x Leylandii*)
	○	Included on Victorian Heritage Register	○	Incorporated Plans	●	Outbuildings and fence not exempt (front fence and gate)
	○	Prohibited uses may be permitted	○	Aboriginal Heritage Place	●	Solar energy system controls

Curtilage



Figure 2. Shirwal Court at 35-39 Deutgam 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*	Shirwal Court is of historical significance as a twentieth century mansion demonstrating the wealth of the Carter family who were established business owners within Werribee during this period. The Carters established a poultry farm which grew to be highly successful in the early twentieth century, leading to great wealth and prosperity and enabling the commission and construction of two large residences in Werribee, including Monleisha (HO89) and Shirwal Court, in the Interwar period. The Carter family were influential in the poultry farming business, which was a key industry for the region, and Shirwal Court is a testament to the wealth and prosperity gained from these endeavours.
B	*Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history*	The place does not meet this criterion.
C	*Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history*	The place does not meet this criterion.
D	*Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments*	Shirwal Court is of representative significance as an example of modernist residential architecture that developed following the depression era. The design of the dwelling is characteristic of the Streamline Moderne and Georgian Revival characteristics that features in Interwar architecture and is a fine example of the application of this style in a residential context.
E	*Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics*	Shirwal Court is of aesthetic significance as a relatively intact example of a large Interwar residence, designed by Arthur Pretty. The dwelling is distinguished by its symmetrical arrangement, central cylindrical tower with conical roof, side wings with hipped terracotta tiled roofing, gradient brown glazed brickwork, white timber framed windows and front landscaping arrangement and details including a circular drive and fountain. The use of glazed bricks on external walls is a

		unique and innovative external cladding material.
F	*Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period*	The 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*	The 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.*	Shirwal Court is of significance for its associations with Walter Carter and Arthur Pretty. Walter Carter was a well-known Werribee entrepreneur in the poultry business, and the location of Shirwal Court was likely selected for its close proximity to the family farm. Walter Carter participated widely in community activities, including serving as a local Councillor, Werribee Shire President, Chair of the Victorian Egg Board and a Life Governor of the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind. Arthur Pretty was a Victorian architect notable for his residential work. Pretty studied at Swinburne Technical College in architecture and building, before working as a draftsman. In 1926, he transferred to the Public Works Department and studied at the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier. He completed a Diploma of Architectural Design in 1930 before opening his own office. Pretty's design of Shirwal Court was a notable success of his architectural career, as well as his residence 'Monleisha' (HO89), another nearby Werribee residence designed in 1940 for Roland Carter, the brother of Walter Carter.

Statement of Significance – Shirwal Court, 35-39 Deutgam Street, Werribee

Address: 35 – 39 Deutgam Street, Werribee	**PS ref no:** HO32



Figure 3. Shirwal Court, 35-39 Deutgam Street, Werribee. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.

What is significant?

Shirwal Court, including its front setback arrangement comprising the circular garden (formerly pond), driveway alignment, front fence and gate, and mature monterey cypress tree (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) and Leyland cypress tree (*Cupressus x Leylandii*), is significant.

The contemporary single storey additions to the side and rear, front portico and side ramp, carparking within the front setback, new landscaping including low plantings and works to the former pond, flagpoles, lighting, all contemporary conduit and signage, is not significant.

How is it significant?

Shirwal Court is of historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Wyndham. Shirwal Court is also of significance for its associations with the Carter family and Arthur Pretty.

Why is it significant?

Shirwal Court is of historical significance as a twentieth century mansion demonstrating the wealth of the Carter family who were established business owners within Werribee during this period. The Carters established a poultry farm which grew to be highly successful in the early twentieth century, leading to great wealth and prosperity and enabling the commission

and construction of two large residences in Werribee, including Monleisha (HO89) and Shirwal Court, in the Interwar period. The Carter family were influential in the poultry farming business, which was a key industry for the region, and Shirwal Court is a testament to the wealth and prosperity gained from these endeavours. (Criterion A).

Shirwal Court is of representative significance as an example of modernist residential architecture that developed following the depression era. The design of the dwelling is characteristic of the Streamline Moderne and Georgian Revival characteristics that features in Interwar architecture and is a fine example of the application of this style in a residential context. (Criterion D)

Shirwal Court is of aesthetic significance as a relatively intact example of a large Interwar residence, designed by Arthur Pretty. The dwelling is distinguished by its symmetrical arrangement, central cylindrical tower with conical roof, side wings with hipped terracotta tiled roofing, gradient brown glazed brickwork, white timber framed windows and front landscaping arrangement and details including a circular drive and fountain. The use of glazed bricks on external walls is a unique and innovative external cladding material (Criterion E).

Shirwal Court is of significance for its associations with Walter Carter. Walter Carter was a well-known Werribee entrepreneur in the poultry business, and the location of Shirwal Court was likely selected for its close proximity to the family farm. Walter Carter participated widely in community activities, including serving as a local Councillor, Werribee Shire President, Chair of the Victorian Egg Board and a Life Governor of the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (Criterion H).

Shirwal Court is also of significance for its associations with Arthur Pretty. Arthur Pretty was a Victorian architect notable for his residential work. Pretty studied at Swinburne Technical College in architecture and building, before working as a draftsman. Post 1926, he transferred to the Public Works Department and studied at the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier. He completed a Diploma of Architectural Design in 1930 before opening his own office. Pretty's design of Shirwal Court was a notable success of his architectural career, as well as his residence 'Monleisha' (HO89), another nearby Werribee residence designed in 1940 for Roland Carter, the brother of Walter Carter (Criterion H).

Primary Source

Shirwal Court citation, Extent Heritage, 2026.

Description

Bunurong Country

Shirwal Court is located on the traditional lands of the Bunurong peoples. They have cared for this Country for thousands of years and continue to care for Country today. The wider landscape is shaped by the flowing waters of Wirribi Yaluk (Werribee River), exceptional and increasingly endangered plains grasslands, ancient volcanic lava flows and the considerable shorelines of Naarm (Port Phillip Bay)(BLCAC, 2026, 10).

Bunurong Country is vast, complex and interconnected. It encompasses the lands on which we live on and the plants and animals it sustains; the Sky Country above which is home to birds and insects and night-time constellations; and the Sea Country which provides so many of the resources that allow us to thrive (BLCAC, 2026, 10).

Physical Analysis

The building at 35-39 Deutgam Street, Werribee, is a former grand residential dwelling of Interwar style featuring Georgian Revival and Streamline Moderne architectural elements. The dwelling is sited on a corner lot facing the intersection of Greaves Street South and Deutgam Street with a large open landscaped corner setback. The building presents as a notable two storey brown bricked dwelling, with extensive single storey contemporary additions to the rear and sides following later conversion into an aged care home, which is the current use. The house has been built with specifically selected glazed bricks which graduate from dark to light from the base of the building. The dwelling is distinguished by its symmetrical arrangement, central cylindrical tower with conical roof, side wings with hipped terracotta tiled roofing, gradient orange and brown brickwork, white timber framed windows and front landscaping arrangement and detailing.

The primary façade has a central cylindrical tower capped with a conical roof. At ground level it protrudes outwards, with a central inset glazed contemporary door with sidelights. Two further glazed double doors with decorative ironwork flank the entrance, adjoining an open patio with steps leading down to the asphalted driveway. The entrance is covered by a later portico (c.1980s) which has been sympathetically designed with brown bricked square columns and tiled low hipped roof. To the south is a contemporary ramp accessed from the driveway.

Above the entrance is a curved balcony enclosed with fine metal balustrading. A central glazed double door with ironwork detailing overlooks the front setback, with a small leadlight porthole window either side. The top level is glazed with three large, curved windows; the central window is a large singular pane whilst the other two are composed of triple double hung sash windows with horizontal panes.

Flanking either side of the tower to the north and southwest, are two asymmetrical double storey wings. The sides are capped with hipped roofs clad in terracotta tiling and with boxed eaves, typical of Interwar Georgian Revival architecture. The wings feature timber framed horizontal paned windows of varied widths and arrangements; painted white, the windows are highlighted against the gradient brown brickwork. A single storey section adjoins the southern wing, which was likely the original garage. The north elevation includes triplet windows to the northern corner, however the elevation is partially obscured by later additions. The east elevation also

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includes varied windows which match the broader fenestration of the building, however this elevation is also partially obscured from the public domain by later additions to the southwest. The rear east elevation is not visible from the street.

The angled placement of the house is enhanced by the front corner setback; predominant features include driveways sealed with asphalt which encircle a central garden roundabout, pedestrian pathways, low plantings and mature trees, including a Monterey cypress tree (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) and a Leyland cypress tree (*Cupressus x Leylandii*). To the boundary is a low original bricked fence, with a pedestrian gate at the corner. The fence is constructed from the same glazed dark brown bricks as those used on the dwelling. The fence comprises low blocky pillars, with a brick wall built between them. The fence is stepped, as the street tilts downhill, and the fence at the corner of the property is curved. A gravelled pathway leads from the gate, through the circular roundabout to the primary entrance. The circular garden bed, originally a pond, is composed of low-rise plantings crossed by gravelled paths; the centre features three contemporary flagpoles.

A mature Monterey cypress tree (Cupressus macrocarpa) is located on the north boundary, west of the building, and a mature Leyland cypress tree (*Cupressus x Leylandii*) is positioned in front of the dwelling on its north side. The driveways are contemporary, with additional internal parking to the north and west. Further contemporary elements include pole lighting, and contemporary metal and sheet metal fencing to the broader boundary.

Surrounding the dwelling, to the west, north and south are single storey contemporary additions for the aged care home. The additions have been sympathetically designed in a mock style, using dark brown brick, hipped roofs with dark brown tiled roofs and cream framed windows and openings.

Alterations and Additions

- Squared entrance portico and side ramp, constructed c.1980s.*
- Single storey additions to the east (rear), north and south, constructed c.1980-2009.*
- Landscaping to the corner setback including repurposing of central circular pond to garden bed, placement of three flagpoles, new asphalted driveway and parking, and new pedestrian paths, constructed c1980s.*

The dwelling is in good condition and is of high integrity.

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

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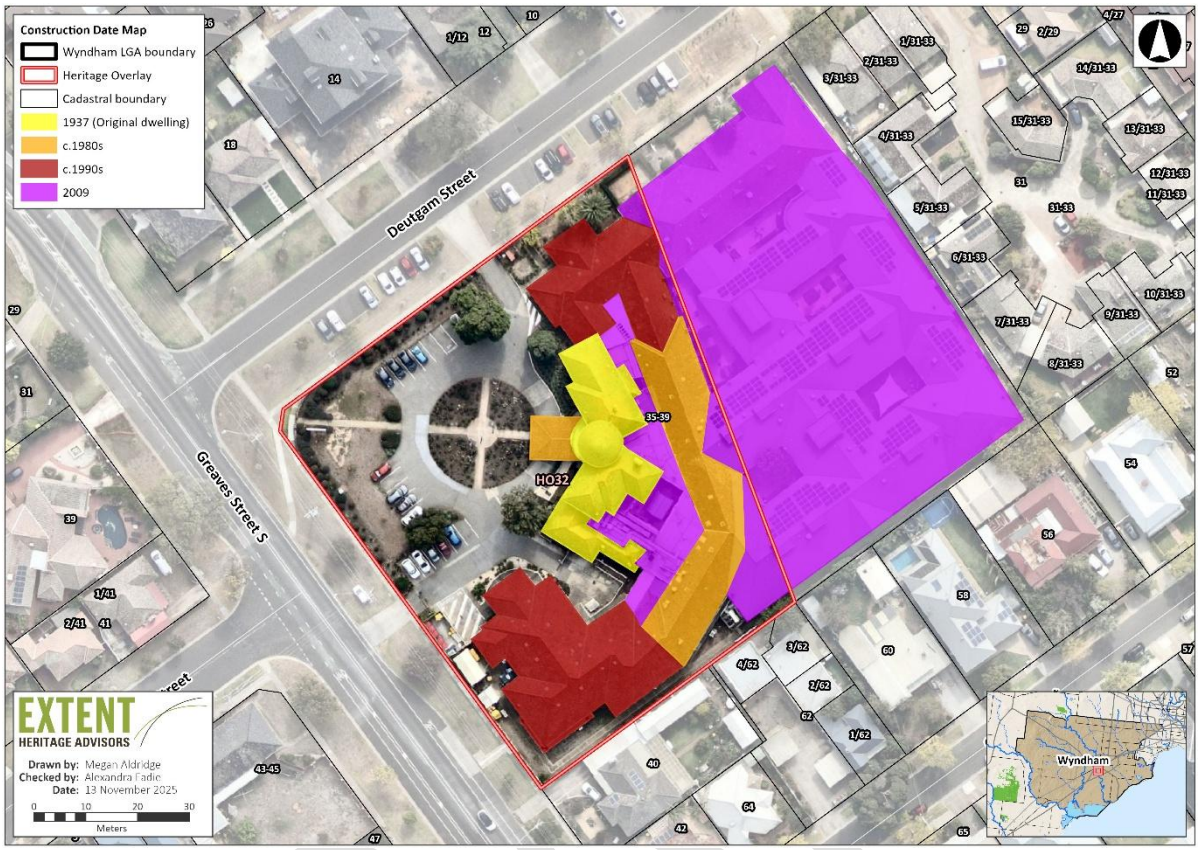


Figure 4. Construction date map of Shirwal Court, 35-39 Deutgam Street, Werribee. *Basemap source:* Nearmap. 2025. Spatial data source: VicMap & Department of Transport and Planning

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History

Shirwal Court, located at 35-39 Deutgam 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.

The early township of Werribee was positioned in proximity to a ford over Werribee River, also known by its traditional name Wirribi Yaluk, 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).

Place History

35-39 Deutgam Street is located on Section 1 in the Parish of Deutgam, first purchased in 1883 by J. O'Donnell (Figure 5). J. O'Donnell was a local horse trainer who raced at the Wyndham Racing Club with his horse 'Lottie' in 1895 (Williamstown Advertiser 1896, 3). It does not appear that O'Donnell owned any other allotments within Wyndham, however he was a longtime tenant of the Chirnside's for 23 years (The Bacchus Marsh Express 1897, 3).

It is unclear when the large allotment was sold by O'Donnell and subdivided, however it is noted that the site had been previously owned by John Beamish. Vera Davies owned the site by the early 1930s, at which time there were three small dwellings constructed (Context 1997, 239).

The Carter Family

In 1937 Walter Carter and his wife Shirley built the grand manor house 'Shirwal Court' within a four hectare plot to the northwestern corner; the name of the house likely composed of a mixture of both names. Walter Carter was a well-known Werribee entrepreneur in the poultry business, and the location of Shirwal Court was likely selected for its close proximity to the family farm (Figure 5). Walter Carter participated widely in community activities, including serving as a local Councillor, Werribee Shire President, Chair of the Victorian Egg Board and a Life Governor of the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (*Williamstown Chronicle*, 10 October 1947, 2: *The Herald*, 7 May 1952, 3; Carter, W.M.S. 1997, 70).

Walter Carter and his family had immigrated from England in 1910, sailing on the R.M.S. Osterley (Melton Express 1935, 4). Settling in Werribee, Walter Carter's father, James Carter,

became the lessee of Crown Allotment 15 of the former Police Paddock. During the family's early years on the allotment, James Carter's sons Walter and James (junior), then teenagers, raised fowls on the property; and they used small scale egg production for pocket money (Weekley Times 1926, 23). As the business grew, two red brick dwellings were constructed within the allotment, now located at 63 and 65 Greaves Street South, Werribee (HO58). Built in c.1915-1920, the two dwellings in Greaves Street were for the two sons who were heavily involved in the day-to-day running of the established poultry farm. The primary residence 'Osterly' at 65 Greaves Street (HO58) was likely the first home constructed for Walter Carter, the house being named after their ship to Australia.

In the 1930s, the Carter's Poultry Farm was regarded as Australia's largest egg farm, with a flock of 100,000 birds producing 40,000 eggs daily (The Australian Women's Weekly 1939, 4; Melton Express 1935, 4). The business had developed into a large-scale operation, extending across 25 acres into Allotments 20, 20A and 21 to the eastern side of Greaves Street South, as well as Lock Avenue nearby. As a result, the 1930s and 1940s were years of increasing prosperity for the Carter family. During this period, they also established Carter's Housing Estate (HO21 and HO136) within Werribee township to house their workers, and built two of three splendid new Carter residences on newly-acquired sites within township; 'Shirwal Court' (HO32), now known as Villa Franca, on the corner of Greaves Street South and Deutgam Street, and Monleisha (HO89), also known as the Roland Carter House, located on the corner of Russell Street and Lock Avenue (HO89).

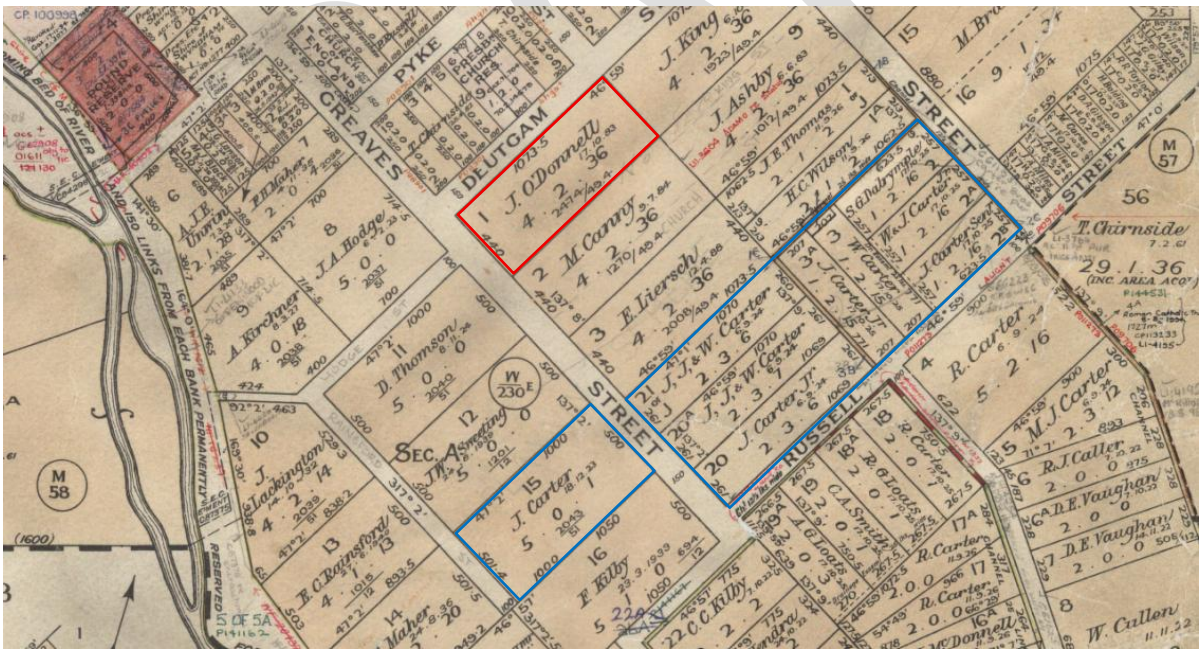


Figure 5. Extract from 1954 Parish Plan, based off c.1900 plans, showing the larger unsubdivided allotments to the south of Deutgam Street. The heritage place is located within lot 1, outlined in red, with nearby early Carter allotments outlined in blue. *Source:* Department of Lands and Survey. 1954. *Deutgam – 2 Parish Plan.* Digitised cartographic material. Public Record Office Victoria (online database). Accessed 22 April 2025. https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/06B4EA92-F442-11EA-BE8C-890B1FA715B8.

Shirwal Court (now Villa Franca) was built to the design of the architect Arthur E. Pretty (Cooper 1941, 8). Pretty was a Victorian architect whose works were primarily residences concentrated in the semi-rural areas of Melbourne's eastern fringe. Born in 1903, he initially studied at Swinburne Technical College in architecture and building, before embarking on experience as a draftsman. In 1926, he transferred to the Public Works Department and studied at the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier. He completed a Diploma of Architectural Design in 1930 before opening his own office. His design of Shirwal Court was a notable success of his architectural career, as well as the residence 'Monleisha' (HO89), another nearby Werribee residence designed in 1940 for Roland Carter, the brother of Walter Carter (Built Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025).

In his book, *The Carter Family of* Werribee, Walter MS Carter described Shirwal Court as follows:

> It was a two storey home with the central round sunroom making it three storeys at that point. The house was built of glazed bricks from Geal's, graduating in colour from dark brown at the base to mid-fawn at the third storey. The glazed tiled roof also shades from brown to a lighter shade…The house was constructed with textured walls, walnut panelled circular entrance hall and circular staircase. It was decorated with 1930's art-deco fittings, wall-to-wall carpeting, glass tiled bathrooms and a hydroponic concealed wall heating by Athertons. The fly-wired window screens which were attached to the lower window sash was something very new in the 1930's. The screens were normally in the wall cavity, but on opening the window the screen came into position and returned to the wall cavity on closing…The grounds were kept in beautiful condition with magnificent trees and several large ponds filled with a mixture of colourful fish (Carter 1997, 52).

The house was designed with a central three-storey cylindrical tower with double storey side wings softly wrapping around a central circular pond (Figure 7, Figure 8 and Figure 9). A driveway from Deutgam Street was the primary entrance, leading visitors around the pond to the front entrance, whilst a secondary entrance from Greaves Street South was likely used by the Carter family and employees. The broader landscaping included vast expanses of flat lawn, planted with a grid of palm trees (*Arecaceae*) and cypress trees (*Cupressus*). A low matching bricked wall wrapped around the north and west of the site, whilst tree hedging distinguished the interior boundaries (Figure 6).

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Figure 6. 1951 Aerial photograph of Shirwal Court and its extensive landscaping, with the Carter Poultry Farm and early Carter houses nearby (left). *Source:* Landata. Digitised aerial photograph. Accessed 15 April 2025. https://www.landata.vic.gov.au/tpc_from_landataonline.aspx

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Figure 7. Photograph of Shirwal Court in 1941, looking southeast from the intersection of Deutgam Street and Greaves Street South. Cypress tree to the north of the house is depicted. *Source: The Australian Home Beautiful*. 1941. Digitised photograph. Vol. 20 No. 3 (March 1941), 8.

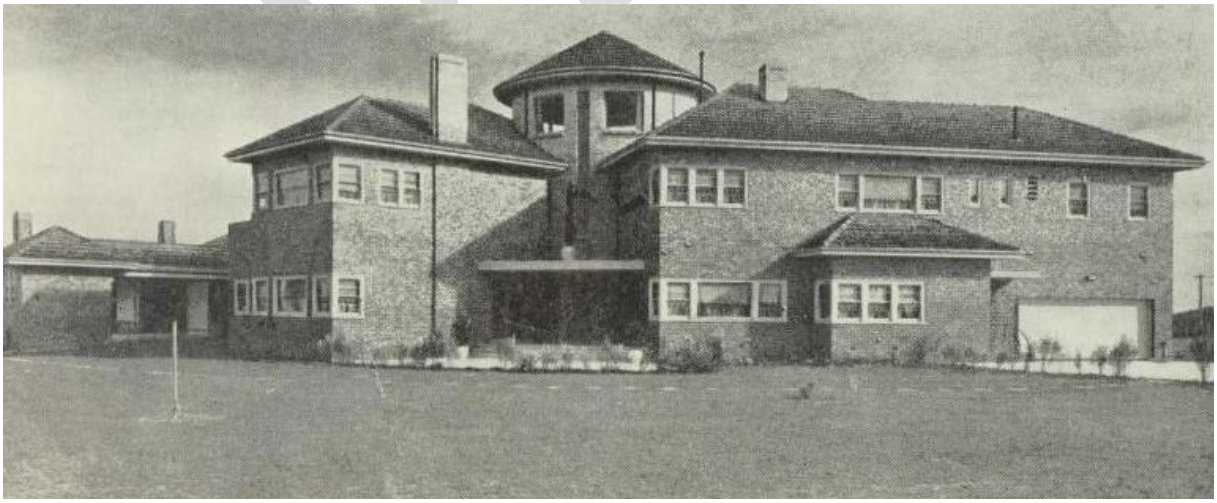


Figure 8. Photograph of the rear of Shirwal Court in 1941, looking west. *Source: The Australian Home Beautiful*. 1941. Digitised photograph. Vol. 20 No. 3 (March 1941), 15.

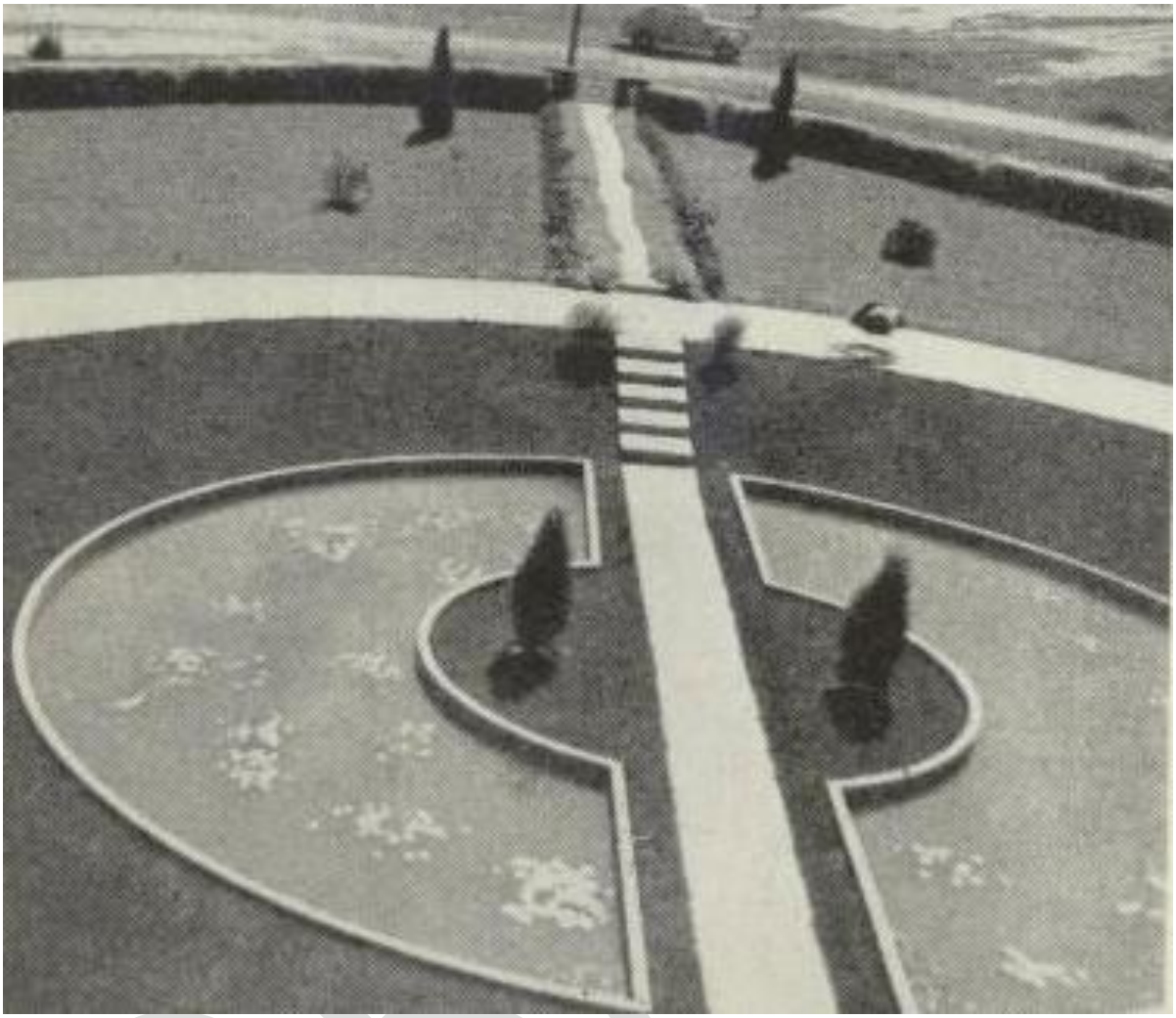


Figure 9. View of front garden from third floor sunroom. *Source: The Australian Home Beautiful*. 1941. Digitised photograph. Vol. 20 No. 3 (March 1941), 13.

After the passing of Walter and Shirley Carter, in 1981 the property was sold to Paul and Franca Di Natale, who purchased the house for the establishment of a local nursing home:

> "We discovered there was no aged-care facility in the area at all. We decided something had to be done to help not only ourselves, but other Italian families with ageing parents. So we bought the house and set up a nursing home." (Starcommunity 2008).

The nursing home has continued operation into the twenty-first century, now known as Mercy Place Wyndham (Figure 10). The property has subsequently undergone significant additions to support its new use including an addition to the rear and construction of a new entry portico (c.1980s), additions to the northern extent and southern extent of the original dwelling (c.1990s), as well as substantial low-rise development to the rear (c. 2009). The house, its corner aspect and some landscaping elements have retained prominence with minor alterations to the original dwelling.



Figure 10. Photograph of the primary façade of Villa Franca (formerly Shirwal Court) in 2008. *Source:* Strong, Bill. 2008. *20080807_0594.* Photograph. Flickr. Accessed 10 June 2025. https://www.flickr.com/photos/87791108@N00/2693839295/in/dateposted/

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Comparative Analysis

Shirwal Court is comparable to the following places:

Monleisha (HO89)

Shirwal Court is directly comparable to the Monleisha, Werribee, another property constructed for the Carter family around the same period also to designs by architect Arthur Pretty. While the Roland Carter House adopts a more prominent streamline modern profile than Shirwal Court, the pair are comparable as large residential dwellings designed as statement pieces in the landscape located on large allotments with generous garden settings.

Muswell (HO97)

Shirwal Court is also comparable to Muswell, a two-storey Interwar dwelling within the Werribee township. Although Muswell adopted a more residential setting at the time of its construction, which is reflected in the comparatively smaller allotment size, it remains a statement piece that showcases an unusual example of Interwar architecture in the municipality. It also features original elements such as the circular drive, front fountain and associated original walling.

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Images



Figure 11. Overview of Shirwal Court looking southeast from the intersection of Deutgam Street and Greaves Street South. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 12. The front façade of Shirwal Court, looking south from Deutgam St entrance. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 13. The front façade of Shirwal Court, looking east from Greaves Street South entrance. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.

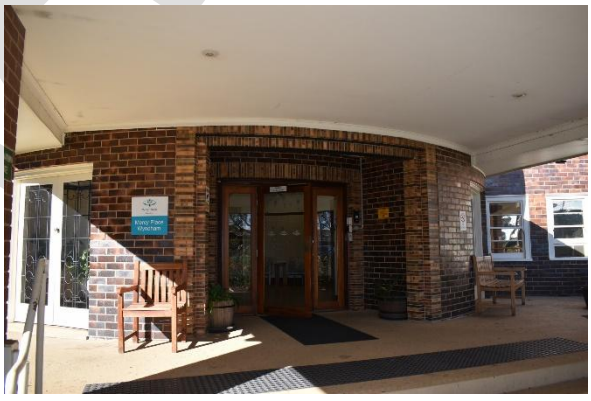


Figure 14. Detail view of the front entry doorway below projecting portico. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 15. View of contemporary additions facing Deutgam Street, with Shirwal Court house adjacent (right). *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.



Figure 16. Two mature trees to the northern extent of the front setback. *Source:* Extent Heritage Pty Ltd. 2025.

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