

Flinders Esplanade

between Norwood and Belhaven Avenues
Reg W. Escott.

Flinders Esplanade was constructed from Norwood Avenue to Belhaven Avenue in 1960-61 by Gordon Jennings Civil Constructions Pty. Ltd. for Messrs. K.D. Reeve, K. Wood, R.W. Escott and W.L. Escott, whose land it subdivided. The road commenced from the southern end on property once owned by Hobart solicitor, Mr Wolfhagen, who was renowned for the daffodils he grew on this property in the 1920s and 1930s. The property was later bought by the city organist of the time, Mr James Scott-Power.

The Belhaven end was property once owned by the Purchas family, who in the 1920s had several acres sown in peas. Later this property was bought by Hobart Solicitor, Mr Robert Clark.

G.W. Griggs and Co. were the surveyors and consulting engineers for the project and Louis Hobden Pty. Ltd. were involved in the supply of metal, gravel etc. Concrete was supplied by Cheverton's Ready Mix Concrete.



Grange Subdivision

Alma D. McKay

The Grange subdivision was first drawn up in January 1924 by Mr J.W. Nichols, the owner of the "Grange". It covered the area south of "Keltonlea", then owned by Mr Douglas, to the small creek which formed the border with Mr Harry Finlayson's property, later owned by Dr. J. Boot.

Many remnants or direct descendants of the extensive gardens of the old "Grange" gardens and "Pineapple" Nursery on the edge of Cartwright Creek were retained by the subdivider.

When the area was subdivided and Grange Avenue constructed, with exceptional foresight, a covenant stipulated that two blocks had to be purchased for each house. This ensured extensive gardens. In many instances purchasers, with an eye to the future, located their houses so that the extra block could be separated at a later date. It was not until the 1960s when, after a protracted legal battle fought by some of the owners of Grange Avenue houses, that a few of these "extra" blocks were sold.

Many of the Avenue's properties still maintain the touch of old England sought by the developer, Mr J.W. Nichols. The large gardens, many large, English style houses, screened by predominantly European trees, have always been an outstanding feature of the Avenue. Grange Avenue, with its wide tree lined street, fulfills the prophecy made soon after it had been constructed that "it would become one of the most fashionable suburbs of Hobart".

The steep entrance to Grange Avenue is thought to follow the original drive to the "Grange" house. A current resident, Mr G. Hills, remembers the original sandstone gate posts. The remnants of the picket fence on the Channel Highway are evident in a 1949 photograph of the water trough and date back to well before 1924.

Several large old fir trees remain from this original drive, together with some huge eucalypts many centuries old.

The avenue continues gently curving towards the river until it branches left and right at a tiny treed traffic island. To the right it terminates in a cul-de-sac near the small creek which augmented the water supply to the

"Grange" home, gardens and fountains. To the left of the traffic island it turns northwards and terminates at the entrance to "Bella Vista" and "Grange End" which occupy the area of the old "Pineapple" Nursery, and contain hawthorn hedges and extremely old fruit trees and shrubs. These remain from the nursery which flourished in this sunny, protected area from the 1830s.

Approaching Tarooma from Hobart, the first houses one sees in the Grange area are "Grange End", down near the water, "Bella Vista", with its swimming pool, and "Keltonlea", near the Channel Highway. "Grange End" was built by Dr. and Mrs Firth after they left "Keltonlea" in the late 1950s.

Number 7 Grange Avenue is also very prominent from the Channel Highway, between two ancient poplar trees and with a century-old walnut tree behind it. This home has been occupied by noteworthy residents, including Claudio Alcorso, and the late Athol Townley, once Deputy Prime-Minister in the Menzie's Government.

The former stables have been owned by prominent people since Mr Preston converted them into a comfortable home. One of these was the late Rosamund McCulloch, who is remembered as a noteworthy artist who also formed the School of Art. She made most of the sweeping alterations, including the construction of a separate studio and the west wing, using sandstone from the old "Grange" home and garden. Along with "Keltonlea", Miss McCulloch's residence was razed in the 1967 bushfires. The house was rebuilt and now stands as a modern home in a very historic shell, the last visible remains of the old Grange stables.

Number 9 Grange Avenue was also affected by the 1967 bushfires, when the garden was almost devastated and 32 window panes were broken. Extensive old hawthorn and lavender hedges were burnt, together with ancient eucalypts in the adjoining creek. The wife of the owner, Dr. V.R. MacIntyre, and a number of children sought refuge on the beach while her husband fought the flames. Towels used to cover the children's heads were scorched and burnt by sparks.

Dr. MacIntyre considers that one positive result of the fire was the great sense of community spirit shown when those who had escaped the fires banded together to mind

children and help restore gardens after that fateful day. Despite the devastation the garden of 9 Grange Avenue still contains some of the original trees and rose bushes from the "Grange" gardens.

Philip Nichols, son of the last owner of the "Grange", tells of exploits as a child in the old stables, together with a description of the old menservant's quarters. These stood near where the Avenue turns to run parallel to the Channel Highway. They were demolished when Mr J. Nichols formed the Avenue.

Mr P. Nichols also recalls the bells contained in these old quarters, which reputedly saved the "Grange" from a convict raid, and which were still in perfect working order in the early 1920s when the building was demolished. Part of this building, along with an eastern section of the old stables, were the only weatherboard buildings on the estate. Mr J. Nichols sought to keep the new subdivision of the highest quality by a covenant which stipulated "the house should be of a cost price of not less than £1,450, and shall be constructed of either stone, brick or concrete only, shall have a tiled roof and that no temporary building shall be erected on such land excepting sheds and worksheds to be used only for the work incidental to the erection of the said house to be built thereon... and shall be removed on completion of the house".

These covenants have been only partly modified in the more recently built houses and the Avenue retains its picturesque tranquility.



Sub-divisional plan of Grange Avenue

