

Place No: 207	Place Name: Avenue of Lemon Scented Gums
Place Type: Trees	Other Names:
Date of Original Assessment: April 2018	Date of Review: N/A



Address: Welshpool Road East	Lot No: Road Reserve
	Plan Diagram: Road Reserve
	Vol Folio: Road Reserve
Locality: Wattle Grove	GPS: - 32° 004268 S 116° 011376 E
Current Use: Trees	Original Use: Trees
Ownership: State Government	Public Access: Yes

HERITAGE LISTINGS

SHO Listing: 25917

Other Listings:

CONSTRUCTION

Date of Construction: Planting c1960

Architect: N/A

Builder: N/A

Architectural Style: N/A

Physical Description: The Avenue of Lemon Scented Gums, Wattle Grove consists of two lines of Lemon Scented Gums (*Corymbia citriodora*) lining the southern (westbound) carriageway of Welshpool Road East for a distance of 450m, with one line of approximately 18 trees along the median strip and another line of trees of 17 trees along the southern road reserve.

	<p>The trees are 15m apart and were roughly planted in pairs on either side of the original alignment of Welshpool Road East.</p> <p>The trees are in good health, and considered to mostly be the same age. Visually, the trees are all approximately the same size with spreading canopies over the southern portion of Welshpool Road East.</p> <p>Together the trees form a substantial avenue for cars travelling west along Welshpool Road East, lining the road for a distance of approximately 450 m.</p>
Method of Construction:	N/A
Condition:	Generally good

HISTORICAL

The settlement of the City of Kalamunda was small and scattered until the 1890s when a railway line was established and the area became a popular holiday and market garden area with small communities dotted along the railway line.

In the new century the Kalamunda area continued to develop into a popular tourism destination, and residential area for weekend living. The flat lands at the base of the Darling Range were still largely used for agriculture and the small farming community at Wattle Grove formed a Progress Association in 1912. This group was active in representations to the Darling Roads Board, the preceding organisation of the current City of Kalamunda. The goals of the organisation as stated in *The West Australian*, 2 August 1912, p.3, were:

- a) The speedy completion of Welshpool Road
- b) The construction of feeder roads
- c) The establishment of a school
- d) The commencement of a bi-weekly postal service
- e) The construction of a meeting hall
- f) Promotion of the district.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s infrastructure such as electricity and transport networks were further developed to throughout the Kalamunda district.

In the post war period, Wattle Grove remained largely rural but underwent modest subdivision and development. At this time Welshpool Road extended in a straight alignment from Welshpool to the small cluster of orchards at the base of the foothills near Lesmurdie.

In 1954, land was resumed adjacent to Welshpool Road at the Canning end of Welshpool Road to service a new railway depot and direct heavy vehicles away from local traffic. Land was also resumed to improve the roads leading to tourist destinations such as the nearby Lesmurdie Falls.

A deviation along the Wattle Grove section of Welshpool Road was planned in 1956. In August 1958, land was resumed by Main Roads for this purpose, with the new road route published in January 1959 and formally declared in October the same year. The new deviation was named Welshpool Road East, with the remaining original section of Welshpool Road renamed Crystal Brook Road. At this time a line of Lemon Scented Gums (*Corymbia citriodora*) was planted by Main Roads along either side of the road reserve. Aerial imagery in 1965 shows the trees were planted about 15m apart and in pairs on either side of the road.

Street trees in urban areas had been planted from early on in the colony's development with a preference for exotic trees in the 19th century. Over time, there was a general shift towards the propagation and planting of more native species. After WWI, the demand for Australian and native species increased, and the State Nursery at Hamel provided these and other species for rural and ornamental uses, with continued distribution to government bodies, including the Railways, Municipalities and Roads Boards, and the Zoological Gardens. This trend continued after WWII, and the by this time eucalypts constituted the majority of trees distributed by the Hamel Nursery.

Main Roads Western Australia had been in the practise of conserving trees within road reserves since 1949, and in 1953 road reserves were expanded to better allow the government body to engage in such conservation and

revegetation. By the mid-1950s this had become a policy of actively planting trees in road reserves to better promote road verges. Don Aitken, Commissioner of Main Roads at this time, was a noted member of the Tree Society, which in 1961 had written to Main Roads to suggest that a 'Tree Expert' be appointed to the department to assist in the planting of trees in median strips. Conversations between the Tree Society and Main Roads at this time focussed on tree planting on median strips along Canning Highway and within Guildford. By 1968, Main Roads had formally appointed a horticultural officer to manage strip plantings.

The planting of the avenue of Lemon Scented Gums, Wattle Grove is reputed to have been instigated by Patrick Moran, the Secretary of the Darling Range Road Board and later the City of Kalamunda, to provide an entry statement into the hills region and provide refuge for local wildlife. No further specific information has been found on the Darling Range Road Board's role in this specific group of trees, however it is known that the Board was in the practice of planting exotic tree species along town streets during the inter-war period, switching to Australian native species in the 1970s.

It has also been suggested that the planting of the lemon scented gums was linked to notable town planner and architect Margaret Feilman, who is associated with a number of culturally significant urban landscapes in the state, however research by the State Heritage Office has not been able to substantiate this connection.

Sometime between 1985 and 1995, Welshpool Road East was duplicated when an eastbound carriageway was constructed to the north of the original road, which then became the westbound carriageway. The lemon scented gums that had formed the northern half of the original avenue were retained in the median strip between the two carriageways.

In November 2016, the City of Kalamunda approved the construction of a Place of Worship at Lot 36 (831) Welshpool Road East, Wattle Grove. As part of the development, access to the site required the construction of a turning lane which required the felling of 13 of the mature Lemon Scented Gums. Significant community opposition was expressed to the City of Kalamunda over the proposed felling of the trees and alternate methods of accessing the site are currently [2018] being considered.

Expressions of the community concern over the issue included a community meeting, petition of approximately 10,000 signatures, a Facebook page which has 1500 followers, several items in the local press and a fundraising campaign. A feature of the commentary by the community has been the role of the trees as an entry statement to the City of Kalamunda.

The Avenue of Lemon Scented Gums, Wattle Grove was referred to the State Heritage Office for assessment in November 2017 and was considered below threshold for inclusion on the State Register of Heritage Places.

Theme:	Transport and communications: Road transport Social and Civic Activities: Environmental Awareness
Associations:	Don Aitken, Main Roads Commissioner Patrick Moran, Darling Range Road Board Secretary
Main Sources:	Documentation prepared by the State Heritage Office for assessment of Place 25917 in December 2017. <i>The West Australian</i> , 7 August 1912, p.6.

SIGNIFICANCE

Level of Integrity:	High
Level of Authenticity:	High
Level of Significance:	Some/moderate

Statement of Significance:

The following statement is drawn from the State Heritage Office Assessment documentation prepared in 2017.

Avenue of Lemon Scented Gums, Wattle Grove, consisting of two lines of Lemon Scented Gums (*Corymbia citriodora*) lining the southern carriageway of Welshpool Road East for a distance of 450m, with one line of approximately 18 trees along the median strip and another line of trees of 17 trees along the southern road reserve, has cultural heritage significance for the following reasons:

- the place is a visually pleasing vista of Eucalypts along Welshpool Road East, which contributes to the community's sense of place.

- the place is associated with the post-WWII practice of Main Roads of planting trees in roadside verges and median strips, which was influenced by the Tree Society of Western Australia.

Management Category:

3

Contributes to the heritage of the locality. Has some altered or modified elements, not necessarily detracting from the overall significance of the item.

Conservation of the place is desirable.

Any alterations or extensions should reinforce the significance of the place, and original fabric should be retained wherever feasible

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS



1953, courtesy Landgate, showing original alignment of Welshpool Road



1965, courtesy Landgate, showing alignment of the new Welshpool Road East.



Trees on the median strip, 2018



Trees on the median strip looking west, 2018

City of Kalamunda
Municipal Inventory Review



Trees on south side of Welshpool Road East, 2018



Median strip tree, 2018



Avenue of gums, south side of Welshpool Road East, 2018



View eastwards through both sides of Welshpool Road East, with the avenue of trees on the right side, 2018