

Do you want to know more about your house? When was it built and who lived there? Are you looking to renovate or restore your house and be faithful to its origins? Perhaps you are interested in Family History or have moved to Hawthorn and want to know the area's history?

The following is a beginner's guide to how you might approach this task.

*To begin:*

- Write down the questions you want answered – is it details of plans, the history of the area, early subdivision of land, owners of the house etc.
- Identify the current Local Government area where the house is situated. Note this may have changed since the house was first built. Before the City of Boroondara was created in 1994 we had Cities of Hawthorn, Camberwell and Kew.
- Check the location of the street on a map and note the street orientation and nearby cross streets. In earlier times, houses were given names rather than numbers, or a description, for example, *back of the Red Lion*. When houses were numbered they were often later renumbered as other houses were built or land was subdivided.
- Begin some background reading- *How to trace the history of your house*, by Des REGAN or a book on our local history. For example, - *A History of Hawthorn*, by Peel, Zion and Yule; *History of Camberwell*, by Geoffrey BLAINEY or *Hawthorn Peppercorns*, by local historian Gwen McWILLIAM.

*Next:*

### **Investigate the architectural style and period of your house.**

- If you can identify the architectural style of your house it will help you establish the approximate date of the building. Browse the library shelves at DEWEY number 720. Useful reference material include the following free publication from Heritage Victoria: *What house is that?: A Guide to Victoria's Housing Styles*. Also an interactive version <http://heritage.vic.gov.au>  
*Recognising House Styles 1880-1990*, by L. BURCHELL. LH FOL 728.373799451 BUR  
*A pictorial guide to identifying Australian architecture: styles and terms to the present*, by Richard APPERLY REF 720.994 APP
- Compare the style of your house with neighbouring properties. This will give an indication of the likely sequence of residential development in your area. However remember that in the older areas, many houses have been renovated and in the process buildings have been extended, original features removed, and other features such as decorative lacework not from that time period, may have been added.

### **Look for research already completed**

- The City of Boroondara and the previous City of Hawthorn have completed a number of useful heritage studies, some of which are available on line at [www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/your\\_council/building-planning/heritage](http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/your_council/building-planning/heritage) and others can be accessed in the local history section of the library.
  - Hawthorn Heritage Study, 1993
  - Review of B graded buildings in Kew, Camberwell and Hawthorn, 2009
  - Review of C graded buildings in the former City of Hawthorn, 2009
  - Auburn Village Heritage Study, 2005
  - Hawthorn Heritage Precincts Study Vol.1
  - Hawthorn Heritage Precincts Study Vol.2
  - Burwood Road Heritage study – in progress.
  - Thematic Environmental History

- Check with the National Trust and Heritage Victoria to see if your house is listed. The State Library of Victoria for plans or photographs. Other resources are the previous owners, neighbours and the Melbourne Mansions Database (for two storey + houses).

### Search for Titles, Maps and Plans

- **Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works** maps. The MMBW was formed in 1881 and produced numbered plans showing streets, property boundaries and drainage. The maps relevant to Hawthorn are available to look at in the Local History Centre at Hawthorn Library (Boroondara Library Service). They are also available through the State Library of Victoria digitalised on line service. Search the catalogue at [www.slv.vic.gov.au](http://www.slv.vic.gov.au)
- A digital copy of the Parish map for Boroondara is also available from the **State Library of Victoria**.
- The Local History Centre of the Hawthorn Library has an extensive series of Vale Real Estate Auction maps – which show the originally subdivisions for example of “Burwood Park” or “Auburn Heights”.
- **Titles Office Records** Available certificates include Register Search Statements (titles), Copies of Plan, VicRoads, Flood Levels etc. To order titles and property certificates you need a property identifier such as a Street Address, Title Volume/Folio number, Lot/Plan number, Council Property number, Crown Allotment number or a Standard Parcel Identifier. [www.landata.vic.gov.au](http://www.landata.vic.gov.au) Fees may be charged for certificates ordered. The Public Records Office announced researchers will soon be able to search for historical certificates on a title whilst using the PROV computers.

*For those who want to go further:*

### Postal Directories

There are a number of postal directories for Melbourne and Victoria such as Sands and Kenny, Sands and McDougall, and Wise and Bailliere, which cover the period 1839-1974. These are excellent resources for discovering who has lived in your house over the years (not the owner). Note early directories do not include house numbers (or numbers may have changed) so you look at these in conjunction with rate books and other resources.

### Rate Books

The Hawthorn Library has the Rate Books from 1863-1933 and 1941-1949 on microform. The **Public Records Office** (PROV) in Shiel St North, North Melbourne, also holds copies from 1867. Reading microform is slow and tedious so plan ahead for what you want to look at and allow plenty of time to decipher the record. If your house is pre 1863 the Boroondara District Roads Board Rate books from 1857 are also held at PROV. Items can be searched for at home on your computer and ordered for viewing at the Public Records Office. For a full list of records held for Hawthorn conduct an Agency search on the online catalogue. From the Searching menu select Find by Number and the select Agency radio button and enter the VA number, into the VA text field and click on Search. Search results will appear and you can also select Related Series. To find municipal records for Hawthorn or Boroondara the VA numbers will vary depending on which Agency created the file. For example, City of Hawthorn (**VA632**) or Boroondara Roads District (**VA 591**) or City of Boroondara 1994- (**VA 3674**).

### Electoral Rolls

Once you have a name of a family you can look for electoral rolls, births, deaths and marriages. Make a booking to search on **Ancestry.com** (available on the library computer).

### Digitalised Newspapers <http://trove.nla.gov.au>

Search digitalised records of local and daily newspapers for references to streets or persons.