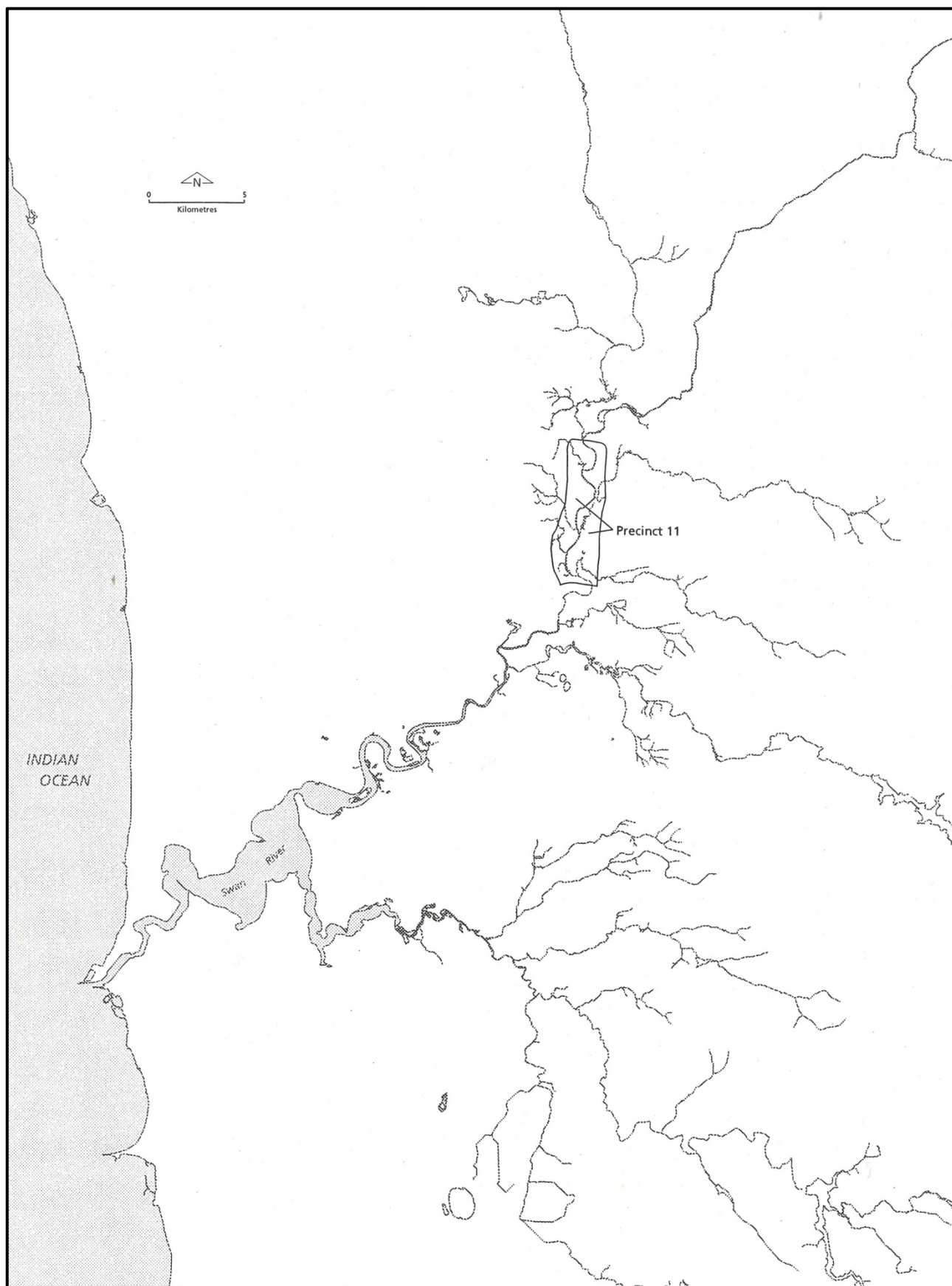


Precinct 11

Middle Swan – Middle Swan Road to Ellen Brook



Summary

Middle Swan – Middle Swan Road to Ellen Brook

The Swan River makes loose, relatively regular graceful meanders forming in places a quite steep river valley. The river channel is quite narrow until it broadens downstream from the Jane Brook confluence. As the river has remained 'untrained', the water forms an attractive irregular pathway through the often quite deep river valley. Several tributaries and smaller drainage lines enter the Swan River at this precinct. These tributaries have gouged fluvial valleys through the soft sandy plains. Small wetlands have formed in the depressions of the undulating plains.

There is a narrow strip of indigenous fringing vegetation along this section of the river. The communities are dominated by flooded gum and swamp paperbark. The river banks are lined with emergent reeds and in places where the riparian vegetation has been removed a variety of weeds have invaded the bank. There are several locations where steep unvegetated banks have eroded due to periods of high water and consequently unattractive scars are left on the river banks.

One of the most dominant landscape elements in the precinct is the vineyards. The rows of the lush green vines against the ploughed red earth provide a distinctive and attractive landscape feature. In addition, there are several historic buildings in the area which provide focal points in the viewsapes. The distribution of the residential dwellings and agricultural sheds is sparse compared to further downstream. Access to the river by the public is quite difficult due to rural land lots adjacent to most parts of the riparian area. There is a small reserve at Middle Swan and an informal path to the river channel at All Saints Church.

Biophysical Processes

Geological Processes

The Swan River flood plains and channel are classified as part of the Quaternary alluvial deposits (DCE, 1980). Adjacent to the river banks are the older Pleistocene deposits of the Guildford Formation. These deposits consist of alluvium which in this area is variably lateritised and podsolised to different extents. To the west of the channel area are the Bassendean Sands and more recent peaty sands in the swales and depressions.

The channel and banks are identified as being part of the Swan Soil Association which is terraces of red earths and duplex soils (McArthur and Bettenay, 1974). Away from the river flood plains on the western bank, is the Guildford Association which is characterised as being fluvial deposits which form a flat plain with medium texture yellow duplex soils. Away from the river channel on the western bank is the Southern River Association which is characterised by sand plains which have been deposited by aeolian processes which have formed low dunes with some intervening swamps, iron and humus podzols, peats and clays.

Topography

The precinct is part of the Pinjarra Plain geomorphic unit which is flat to gently undulating (Seddon, 1972). The unit consists of fluvial sediments which have been deposited from the streams which flow down from the Darling Range and as they reach the lower gradients drop their sediments. As a result, wide alluvial fans have formed at the base of the Darling Range. Around the Swan River and its tributaries, the unit has been modified by fluvial processes. The flat flood plains are contrasted by the opposite embankments being quite steep and up to 5 metres high. In many cases the flood plain is particularly broad and the edge is delineated by an embankment up to 50 metres away from the river channel.

Hydrological Processes

Water features

The Swan River is estuarine up to the Ellen Brook confluence, however tidal effects are minimal. Most of this section of the river remains un snagged and as a consequence the river channel is subject to eddies, and past changes in channel direction are evident adjacent to Pow Street wetlands. Floodplains form flat alluvial terraces and often appear as muddy banks supporting fringing vegetation. Several small drainage lines and six larger brooks enter the Swan River at this precinct. The tributaries drain the surrounding plain forming valleys and channels which irregularly meander through the areas of lowest topography.

Adjacent to Herne Street the drainage lines form several pools and small wetlands areas. Similarly, the Pow Street wetland occurs in a depression adjacent to the Swan River and a small tributary. Several small wetlands occur north of Jane Brook. Many of the tributaries and wetlands are ephemeral.

Bathymetry

Beyond Middle Swan Road, the river is very shallow with recently formed sand banks. It is likely that the sand banks have formed since colonial settlement as early settlers were able to navigate right up to the Ellen Brook confluence which is now very difficult.

Flooding

The flood line is quite broad and stretches to over a 1 km in width in, this precinct and tends to be widest at the various tributary confluences.

Erosion and accretion

There is particularly severe erosion just upstream of the Jane Brook confluence, while isolated areas of erosion occur on many of the steeper banks. Unvegetated steep banks have been recently eroded during periods of high water. The landslides have formed deep scarring exposing the sandy alluvial soils of the banks.

Vegetation Communities

Native

Swan Complex

The Swan Complex edges the entire foreshore of this precinct from Middle to Upper Swan (DCE, 1980). The vegetation ranges from fringing woodland of flooded gum (*Eucalyptus rudis*) and swamp paperbark (*Melaleuca rhaphiophylla*) with localised occurrence of low open forest of sheoak (*Casuarina obesa*) and saltwater paperbark (*Melaleuca cuticularis*). Along the very fringe of the river the emergent shore rush (*Juncus kraussii*) and pale rush (*Juncus pallidus*) form a closed sedge land. Marsh club rush (*Bulboschoenus caldwellii*) is present in the river channel upstream of Middle Swan Bridge and depends on fresh water flushing. There is some lake club rush (*Schoenoplectus validus*) downstream of the Jane Brook confluence. Both of these communities occur as monospecific emergent stands, which normally occur in front of a fringing woodland. The flooded gum (*Eucalyptus rudis*) - swamp paperbark (*Melaleuca rhaphiophylla*) community occurs almost continuously as a narrow ribbon along the riverbank in this precinct.

Adjacent to Middle Swan Bridge, swamp sheoak (*Casuarina obesa*) is interspersed with the flooded gum and paperbark community. The understorey is generally disturbed and is dominated by exotic grasses.

Guildford Complex

The Guildford Complex occurs on the eastern side of the Swan Complex at Heme Hill and Millendon (DCE, 1980). The complex ranges from a mixture of open to tall open forest of marri (*Eucalyptus calophylla*), wandoo (*Eucalyptus wandoo*) and jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*). The understorey species include bull banksia (*Banksia grandis*), slender banksia (*Banksia attenuata*) and firewood banksia (*Banksia menziesii*), black gin (*Kingia australis*), blackboy (*Xanthorrhoea preissii*), prickly mosses (*Acacia pulchella*), white myrtle (*Hypocalymma angustifolium*), Swan River myrtle (*Hypocalymma robustum*), common hovea (*Hovea trisperma*) and buttercup (*Hibbertia hypericoides*). The disturbed understorey consists of bracken fern (*Pteridium esculentum*) and exotic grasses.

A small stand of wandoo (*Eucalyptus wandoo*) occurs north of Wandoo Creek and near Bandyup women's prison. It also occurs at the confluence of Susannah Brook and opposite the Henley book confluence at Millendon. The complex is most often disturbed and the understorey consists of grasses.

Southern River Complex

The Southern River Complex occurs adjacent to Jane and Ellen Brooks. The complex is identified as being jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*), marri (*Eucalyptus calophylla*) and various banksia species. Along the various drainage lines there is a fringing woodland of flooded gum (*Eucalyptus rudis*) and swamp paperbark (*Melaleuca raphiophylla*) and sheoak (*Casuarina obesa*). Remnant marri (*Eucalyptus calophylla*), banksia (*Banksia attenuata*) and (*Banksia menziesii*) woodland communities are found on the drier areas. This understorey is open and dominated by species such as blackboy (*Xanthorrhoea preissii*) and zamia palms (*Macrozamia riedlei*) and an abundance of exotic grasses. The disturbed understorey consists of bracken fern (*Pteridium esculentum*) and exotic grasses.

Exotic

The vegetation communities in the area are particularly degraded and weed species have invaded the remnant areas. Couch (*Cynodon dactylon*) dominates the understorey in the open woodlands, while other species such as dock (*Rumex crispus*) and wild oats (*Avena fatua*) are also highly prevalent. In the closed banksia woodlands, one sided oats (*Avena barbata*) and wild oats (*Avena fatua*) occur. Near Susannah Brook there

is a major infestation of blackberry (*Rubus* sp). Other weeds species include watsonia (*Watsonia bulbilifera*), dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*), dock (*Rumex crispus*), giant reed (*Arundo donax*), water couch (*Paspalum dilatatum*) and evening primrose (*Oenothera* sp).

Historical Land Use and Resulting Environmental Changes

The earliest description of this section of the river by a European explorer of the precinct was made by Vlamingh in January 1697. He noted that 'rounding a corner we found the end of the river which divides itself into many views, that we could not proceed any more' (in Seddon, 1972). In 1801, the French explorers proceeded up to St Leonards Creek and possibly travelled on foot to Henley Brook. At the location south of St Leonards Creek they noted a lake of freshwater 'Etang d'eau douce'. On the journey Bailey wrote that the 'banks of the river appeared almost everywhere covered with beautiful forests, which extended a considerable way into the interior of the country.

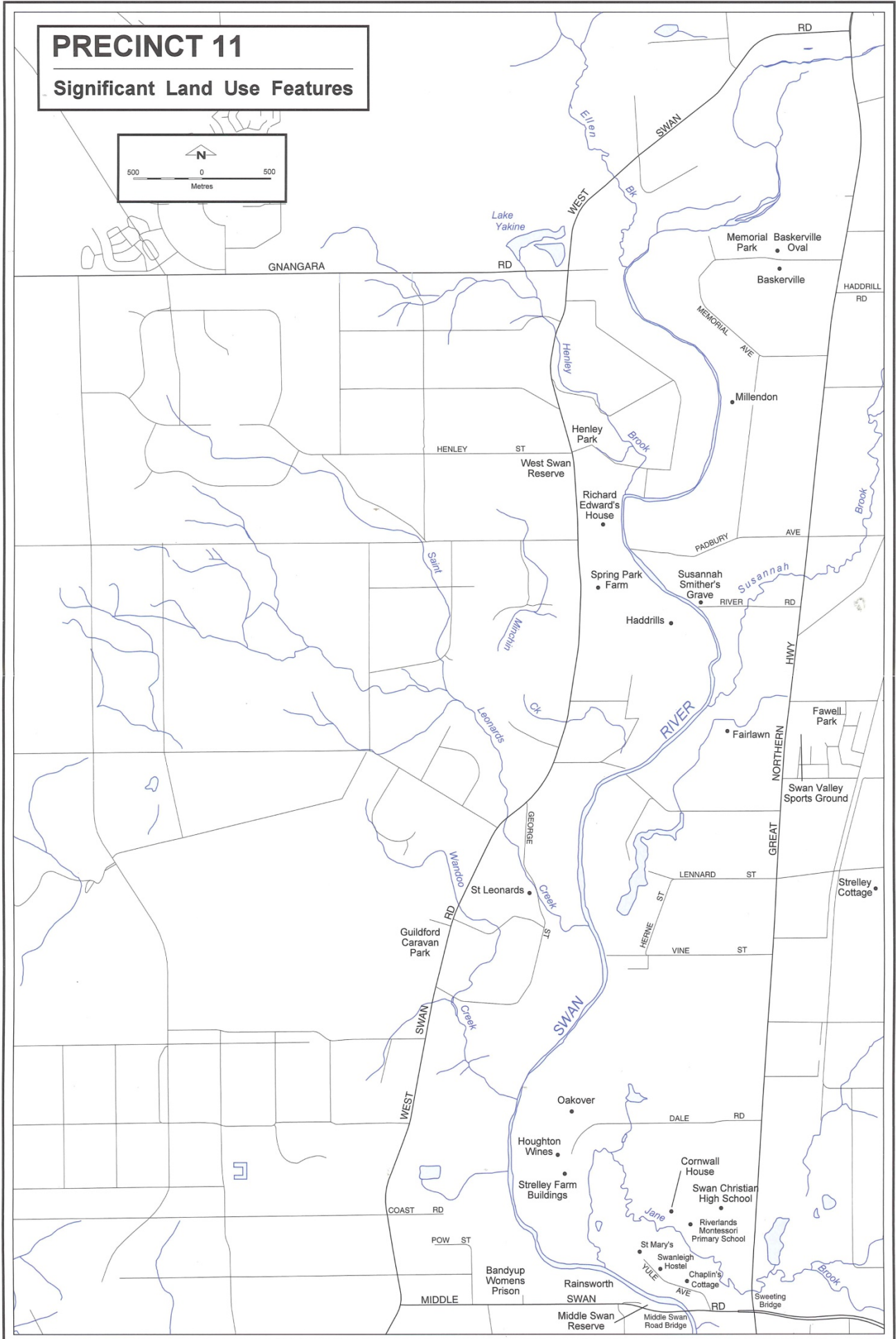
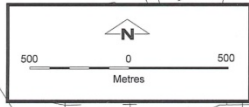
Captain Stirling and his exploratory party were able to travel to the confluence of the Swan River and Ellen Brook in March 1827. They were hindered from travelling any further upstream by debris and the lack of water except for a few pools in the channel. The site of Stirling's camp is marked by All Saints Church (Bourke, 1987).

The relatively rich soils of the Middle and Upper Swan meant that the original land lots were in high demand. Several properties were established as farms which were typically used for several types of agriculture, including wheat crops, fruit and vegetables and livestock such as sheep and cattle. However by the 1840s, settlers such as Thomas Yule had established the first vines in the area which was soon to become the favoured crop. Many of the original homesteads are of historical importance and their significance is outlined below.

During the subdivision of the nineteenth century estates after World War I, southern Europeans were able to develop the land. The Swan Valley foothills were planted to vines immediately after the war when demand for the valley was created by a soldier settlement scheme and by an increase in European migrants. Many of the soldier settlers had no experience in farming and were unable to make their land viable and these properties were generally purchased by European migrants who were used to the trials of intensive horticulture. The vine plantings were quite successful; however after 1940s production declined because of generally unsuitable soils, poor drainage and disease. These settlers were responsible for changing the landscape to a open character with few trees.

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Significant Land Use Features



Small homesteads and horticultural plots dot flat to gently undulating landscape. Clay from the river was excavated for brick manufacture by Whitemans at Middle Swan (also by the Midland Brick company) although this is no longer carried out (Shire of Swan, 1976).

Present Land Use and Social Patterns

Viticulture is the chief rural land use in the area. The mainly small family run properties produce a range of wines from bulk to premium quality. Several blocks of land are also used for fruit and vegetable production, with citrus orchards typically occurring on the higher land. Often the vineyards also encourage tourism by selling produce direct to the public and many of the larger vineyards have cafes, restaurants and function centres. Several horse agistments occur around the lower section of the precinct. Along Great Northern Highway and West Swan Road retail outlets, such as growers markets, farm supplies and delicatessens occur on small roadside blocks. A caravan park occurs on West Swan Road as well as a petrol station and other retail outlets.

Most of the residential dwellings are associated with a larger agricultural property. A small area of higher density housing occurs around Coast Road where a large property has been subdivided into small residential blocks. The houses are mainly modern.

Swanleigh hostel is adjacent to Jane Brook and serves as a residence for country students. The lower land is set aside for horse agistments and riding. Riverlands Montessori primary school and Swan Christian High School occur east of Jane Brook. The Primary school has a small playground while the high school is located on a large block of land which includes gardens and an oval.

Prominent essential amenities include the high power tension lines which cross the southern section of the precinct. West Swan Road has several wooden bridges which cross the tributary valleys. Similar bridges occur at Middle Swan Road. Bandyup women's prison and training centre is a modern complex on Middle Swan Road.

Recreation nodes

At Henley Brook adjacent to the West Swan Road crossing there is a grassed area enclosed by some remnant eucalypt woodland. The area provides for parking, public toilets, tennis, basket ball, and play ground equipment. A small hall is located on the Henley Street side of the reserve.

Baskerville Hall and pavilion is located on Memorial Avenue. The main hall was built in the 1950s in memory of those who served in the world wars. Several additions have been made to the hall. The centre has grassed oval and facilities for tennis, cricket and football, and barbecue and play equipment. It is also the site of local community events.

Fawell Park and the adjacent Swan Valley Sports Ground occur east of Great Northern Highway at Herne Hill. The area has several reticulated ovals and facilities for basketball, netball, tennis, cricket, and soccer groups. There several barbecues adjacent to the clubrooms and playground equipment.

Public access

Most of the river remains un snagged therefore motor boats are unable to access much of the river. Most properties stretch down to the river foreshore and public access is restricted. There is restricted access down to the confluence of Ellen Brook at All Saints Church. The area is fenced and a turnstile gate allows access to a pathway.

Sites of Nyungar & Wider Australian Community Significance

Nyungar significance

The abundance of water in the area would have meant that before colonisation, the precinct would have been an important location for food resources. It was noted by Captain Stirling on his 1829 exploratory voyage that at Ellen Brook where the river ceased to be navigable, the river bank was pitted with diggings for yam (Seddon, 1972). Jane Brook is recorded as a mythological site and also is the location of three scattered camping areas (O'Conner *et al*, 1989). One recent camping area was a seasonal grape pickers' camp located south of Dale Road near the confluence with the Swan River. A second camp was placed west of the present Searle Street (previous precinct) and a third was located outside of the precinct adjacent to the crossing of Toodyay Road and Jane Brook. The third camp was used by families who earned money cutting timber for contractors supplying the Midland and Caversham brickworks early this century (Bourke, 1987).

Nyungars speak about the existence of a creative Waugal in Jane Brook. The upper reaches of the tributaries that flow from Red Hill are *Winnaitch* areas. This means that Nyungars avoid these places due to the evil influence of *wurdaatjis*. *Wurdaatjiss* are spirits who live in forests and assume a small human like form and are considered dangerous to humans if aroused (Quike, undated).

Other significance

The original Saint Mary's Church was a little octagonal building with rammed earth walls built by the Rev, William Mitchell in 1839-40. It was designed by Mr T. Yule and his father-in-law Dr Harris. The Reverend Mitchell had arrived in 1838 with his family and in that year completed the Guildford Church and commenced building churches in Middle and Upper Swan. The existing church was built in 1868 and consecrated in 1869. The new church was built in the shape of a cross using pressed brick and corrugated iron roof. The Gothic Revival design was by Richard Roach Jewell, the nave was extended westward and transepts were added in later years. Some of the most influential pioneers of the area are buried in the church including the Viveash family and Lucy Yule who was the first to be buried at the site in 1838.

Swanleigh Hostel in Yule Avenue, Middle Swan, was established in 1874 by Archdeacon Brown as a large orphanage for boys. The buildings were also used as an English mission for the local Aboriginal people. However the indigenous peoples were not particularly interested in the schooling or religion offered by the missionaries and it is believed that few Aboriginals were at Swanleigh. Today, the Swanleigh Hostel is used as a residence for country students who are studying at Perth high schools. There are several buildings of historical significance at Swanleigh. Brown House was built in the late 1870s, Cornwall House in the gold rush era and Waylen House this century. The chaplain's cottage was built in the mid 1870s; there have been several additions and today it is used as a residence for one of the staff.

Middle Swan Bridge was built in 1879 which dramatically improved transport to the rapidly growing town.

The Strelley Farm buildings on Dale Road were established in 1859. There is a barn, slab shed, and workmen's cottages which were built around the 1880s.

Houghton Homestead and Winery are on Dale Road, Middle Swan. The syndicate of Thomas Yule, Vivien Lewis and Richard Houghton formally acquired 4000 acres of land on the Swan River on 1 November, 1837 from Revett Henry Bland. Thomas Yule came to the colony in 1830 and named the property after Houghton who never visited the colony. In 1837, Yule married Lucy Harris who died during the birth of their son the following year. She was the first to be buried in then unbuilt St Mary's Churchyard. It is believed that the vines were planted in the early years by Yule, however the main crop was wheat along with several orchards. After the death of his wife, Yule and his son lived with the Harris family at Strelley.

The property was sold to Dr John Ferguson in 1859 who claimed to be the first person in the state to use anaesthetic (Battye, 1912). In 1869, local history has it that the bushranger Moondyne Joe was captured nearby while stealing wine from the vineyard. The property gradually changed to a vineyard and is now known for its wines, and the homestead (1863) is used for sales. Also present are servants quarters built around the same period. The site is a popular spot for lunches, music events and other functions.

Oakover House on Dale Road was established in 1860. The barn (1840s) and the stables (1880s) are also classified by the National Trust and included on the National Estate Register (Thurlow *et al*, 1986).

On the west bank of the Swan River at St Leonard's, Albion town was established in the 1830s. The land was originally owned by Mr Lator who sold it to W. H. Smithers, William Haddrill, David Drig and Mr Marley. The town consisted of these families who were agricultural labourers (Carter, 1986). There is little evidence of the settlement today.

St Leonard's was constructed about 1842 in West Swan and is used as a riding school today at George Street.

Haddrill's House adjacent to West Swan Road was built by Richard Edwards in the 1830s and was owned by William Haddrill (Battye, 1912).

Susannah Smither's grave is dated at 1840 and is located on the riverbank in line with River Road. The adjacent brook was given her name (WA Tourism Commission, 1986).

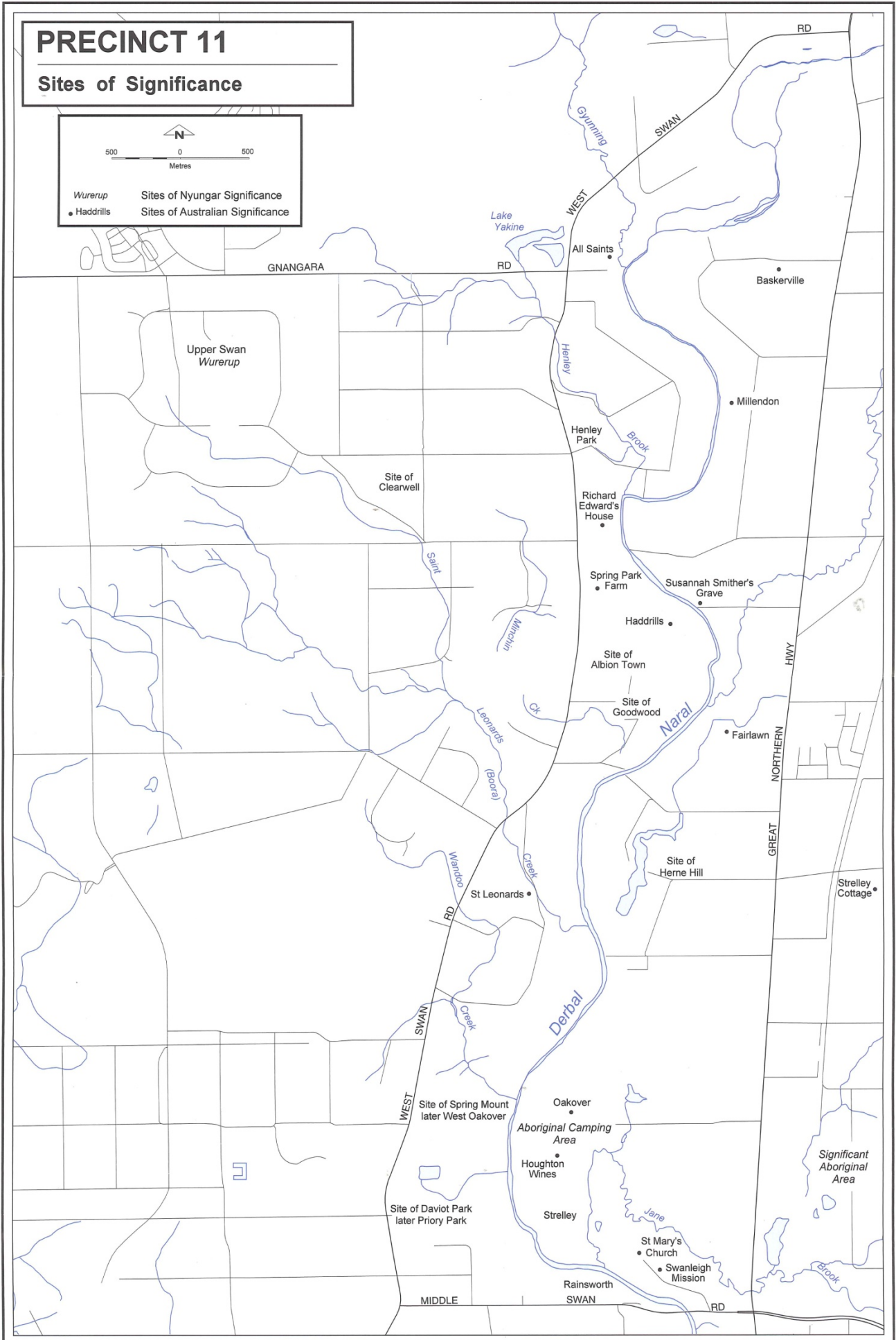
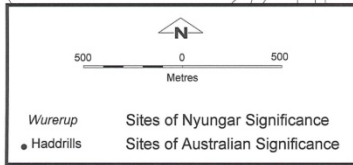
Jane Brook was once known to local residents as Deep Creek.

Spring Park Farm is located adjacent to West Swan Road and was constructed in the early 1850s. The original owner James Michin was speared to death in 1837 by the indigenous people. Michin's House was constructed of rammed earth and was built in the early 1830s and has since been demolished. However the Spring Park farm buildings built in the period of 1851-1880 are still present. At the turn of the century, Michin's grandson William had several crops and various breeds of sheep on the small property (Battye, 1912).

At Henley Brook, Richard Edwards, a master brick maker, built his house in the 1850s and it is now registered with the National Trust. North of this area is Henley Park which was built in the 1880s and registered with the National Trust (Thurlow *et al*, 1986). There are several ruins, including the house (1829-1850) and the stable (1851-1880).

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Sites of Significance



At Ellen Brook a private bridge was built in the period 1881-1900. The Baskerville residence on Memorial Avenue was built around that time and today is still used as a private dwelling. The Baskerville property was owned by Walter Padbury and then Henry Hardwick. Hardwick produced hay for racehorses and apples. He wound down the cattle and dairy operations of the farm and turned to racehorse breeding which proved to be a successful venture.

All Saints Church and graveyard is located on the site used by Stirling as a camp in 1827 and marks the furthestmost inland point reached by Stirling on this trip. The one acre of land was donated by Major Irwin and W. Mackie of the Henley Park Estate. The small mud brick church was built by Richard Edwards, a master brick maker from Gloucestershire, England. The church was opened in 1841 and many early settlers were buried in the adjacent graveyard. The Lich-gate was built in 1929 to commemorate the centenary. In 1986, a grant from the Western Australian Government allowed a cottage and cloisters to be built. In 1988, money was received to repair the graves and church. The church was recently restored and a caretaker's cottage and cloisters constructed.

Conservation Areas

Wetlands

There are several small wetlands in the area which are covered in the System 6 area.

System 6

M19 Swan River - Guildford to Walyunga National Park

The recommended area extends along the Swan River from Guildford to Walyunga National Park. The natural vegetation along much of this length of river is reduced to scattered trees along the banks, though above the Swan's confluence with Ellen Brook. The banks are relatively well wooded. Flooded gum, swamp sheoak and paperbark occur throughout the reaches of Middle and Upper Swan, in some sections saplings and seedlings are present but elsewhere animals have prevented regeneration. The land adjacent to the river is mainly used for stock while vineyards occupy most of the remainder of the valley.

Landscape Description

Precinct Description

Waterform and natural riparian zone

The river makes loose relatively regular graceful meanders throughout the precinct. It forms a deep valley in the soft fluvial sediments which are often scoured during periods of high water level. Consequently, small landslide gouges are noted on the steeper gradients. In many places, the braided river channel forms islands and exposed clayey banks or levees such as adjacent to the Jane Brook confluence.

At Middle Swan Bridge, the channel broadens and the surrounding landform slope is gentler than upstream. The reserve has various species of fringing reeds, some of which are emergent; others grow on the river banks and together provide subtle differences in form and colours. Often fallen trees and branches inhibit the flow and provide an obstacle for sediment to build up against. Several tributaries and smaller drainage lines enter the Swan River in this precinct. Jane Brook forms a U-shaped curve moving northwards and back southwards before confluent with the Swan. The brook is very shallow and has very small meanders which 'snake' across the river bends. Other main tributaries are Wandoo Creek, Saint Leonards Creek, Susannah Brook, Henley Brook and Ellen Brook. These tributaries have gouged fluvial valleys through the soft sandy plains. In the case of Ellen Brook a wide flood plain occurs at West Swan Road and the narrow channel braids and meanders towards the Swan Valley passing through a quite steep hill side. The other tributaries do not form such broad flood plains, and their channel widths are narrow and irregular. The small tributaries such as Susannah Brook have a high degree of sinuosity with irregular meanders across the flat alluvial terraces. Henley Brook forms several pools in the channel adjacent to Brockman Road. There are several wetlands adjacent to Herne Street and Jane Brook. These wetlands are fringed with bulrush and other exotic grasses. The Heme Street wetland has a few juvenile paperbarks, while the Jane Brook wetlands are less disturbed and mature paperbarks and flooded gums are present.

Landform

One of the most important landscape elements in this precinct is the landform, as its gently undulating plains and deeply scoured river valley define the region's identity. In most sections of the precinct, the river user can only view the river by standing on the edge of the fluvial valley, which is often very steep and subject to erosive processes. The landslides and fluvial sediments create flat river bank platforms in front of the steep slopes. The flat to gently undulating surrounding landform appears a dominant feature due to the low density of the housing and the linear and low form of the vineyard land use.

Any deviation from a flat surface is emphasised by the rows of vines planted in straight rows across the landform.

Vegetation

The flooded gum - swamp paperbark community occurs almost continuously as a narrow ribbon along the riverbank in this precinct. In some sections, the ribbon effect is emphasised by the fringing rushes which form a line of brushy texture along the water's edge.

On the undulating plains, the land has been clear felled except for a few small blocks for agricultural purposes. Vines, orchards and domestic gardens have replaced marri-banksia woodland. Areas which are too low lying for agricultural purposes have retained the vegetation sections.

The Middle Swan Reserve has grassed open parkland with flooded gum and swamp sheoak. The exotic grasses are mainly mowed throughout the year and there is very little indigenous understorey. Between Middle Swan Reserve to east of Pow Street, there is a grassed open parkland with flooded gum and sheoak and exotic grasses. North of this section flooded gum and swamp paperbark form a narrow band adjacent to the foreshore with lake club rush. The wetland is an important landscape element as it provides a slightly broader belt of relatively indigenous vegetation community in an area which has sparse indigenous vegetation communities. The community is unfortunately relatively inaccessible to the river user and is visually separated by the Pow Street urban area where the trees provide a backdrop to the houses. A similar community occurs at Henley Brook and includes pale rush as an understorey.

Adjacent to Jane Brook, the area is dominated by flooded gum and swamp sheoaks, while further upstream of Jane Brook the vegetation changes to flooded gum and paperbark. Adjacent to the confluence of Wandoo Creek with the Swan River is a small stand of wandoo with a disturbed understorey.

Near Houghton Wines there is closed woodland around a small lake which consists of marri, jarrah, firewood banksia, slender banksia and sheoak. The understorey is open and dominated by species such as blackboys, zamia palms and exotic grasses. At Susannah Brook, there is modified woodland with flooded gum and swamp paperbark which changes to marri and jarrah on higher ground. Weeds have invaded the understorey. The Heme Street wetland is surrounded by exotic grasses and bulrush and only a few small swamp paperbarks are present. The plains have been cleared for agricultural purposes and the vegetation consists of the green rows of grape vines and the neat dark green rows of citrus fruit trees. In some areas a few remnant marri and blackboys occur on the roadside reserve.

Riparian land use

The reserve at Middle Swan Bridge is one of the few areas where the public can access the river in this precinct. The area has attractive mature wandoo and flooded gum which shade the gravel car park and partly grassed picnic area. There are several picnic shelters and barbecues. A small concrete and stone access ramp is adjacent to the car park; however it is at present rather poorly maintained. The loose gravel car park is visually preferable a hard surfaced car park, but the gravel tends to encroach onto the riparian zone which is already subject to natural erosion processes. On the southern bank of the car park the sparsity of understorey fringing vegetation, means that during high flood periods or overuse by picnickers, pressure is put on the banks. The bridge itself is a low form wooden piled structure with white bollards. Its low old form is attractive in the context of a rural environment, however the road and bridge is currently being resurfaced which is temporarily requiring earthworks.

The vineyards, horse agistments and other fields mostly extend right to the river valley. In areas where the riparian vegetation has been removed, such as adjacent Strelley vineyards, the steep embankment has been dramatically eroded and great blocks of the loamy red soil have slipped into the river channel. Adjacent to Upper Swan Bridge, the river valley has been mainly cleared of its fringing vegetation for grazing. However the actual riparian zone has some remnant vegetation.

West Swan Road crosses Saint Leonard's Creek using an attractive wooden piled bridge which stretches across the river channel. On the rise of the southern bank there is a mobile phone transmitter tower which is quite prominent in an area where most land use is below the backdrop landform.

Land use

The Swanleigh Hostel is a large well spaced complex with the original orphanage dormitories forming the central building. Many additions have been made, but most have been in keeping with the older buildings. The two storey Federation styled building is a brick and new red metal roof which is elongated and evenly proportioned. The area is lawned with a neat eclectic garden with several mature trees. On the lower lying land, fields are used for horse stables and riding areas. Adjacent to this area is a thick fringing belt of flooded gum and melaleuca of the Jane Brook and wetland areas.

Saint Mary's Church is an attractive red brick church with areas of white render. The roof is corrugated metal sheeting and the church is neatly maintained. The old gravestones and mature exotic conifers and pines, give a sense of age and time to the

location. A red brick wall obscures the parking area from the church grounds and also gives a definite boundary to the area.

The Riverlands Montessori Primary School consists of several small wooden cottages with red tin roofs which are located adjacent to the Jane Brook wetlands. The school is surrounded by several mature wandoo and flooded gum and the gravel driveway is planted with eucalypts. The Swan Christian High School is a modern low formed building constructed of pale brick with a light green tin roof. The school is on the flat land adjacent to Jane Brook. The lawn in front of the school is lawn and has been planted with a variety of eucalypts. In the school ground is a high tension powerlines tower which connects with the chain of powerlines across the precinct in a south west- north west line.

A few rows of vines edge the Great Northern Highway marking the entrance to Houghton's Winery. The main block of vines is off Dale Road and adjacent to Jane Brook. The vines form neat rows of green foliage between which evening primrose grows in the red soil. There is a large 1920-40s bungalow situated on the northern side of Dale Road which has an attractive cottage garden. A block of open marri-banksia woodland occurs on the rise of Dale Road and the road verge is lined with mature lemon scented gums. The northern side has cleared undulating fields with a few remnant jarrah and wandoo. Jane Brook and the associated wetland pools have a quite dense flooded gum - paperbark community. Unfortunately, much of the understorey is grasses and watsonia, giving the area the characteristics of wooded pasture. The water bodies themselves are attractive features in the landform depressions and the Darling Range acts as an attractive backdrop.

The main Houghton homestead is an attractive well proportioned Victorian brick and slate building. The building is an excellent example of the unadorned classical homesteads which were quite popular in the Victorian period and although it may be said that this style is reminiscent of the simplicity of the older Georgian styles, in such isolated areas as the Swan Valley simplicity was a necessity due to the lack of resources and supplies rather than a conscious style. The main homestead still retains the large kitchen, meat room, hay loft and stables, although sensitive modifications have been made for the more recent uses of wine sales and function centres. The court yard is filled with mature exotic trees such as Cape lilac and jacarandas, and the area is grassed. The Swan River can only be accessed by crossing the private property.

The other vineyards in the area create a distinctive landscape. The vines form attractive rows of lush green foliage contrasting with the red coloured soil. The vine struts vary in style and are a mixture of wooden and metal supports. The residences are normally located adjacent to the road rather than in the centre of

the vineyard. Many of the houses have a distinctive Mediterranean style reflective of their owners' ethnicity. Brick arches and tiled porches are quite characteristic of houses built by some of the viticulturists of southern European origin. Other house styles include older corrugated iron cottages to more recent modern styles which are typical suburban houses with a front garden. Most of the houses are associated with the surrounding rural land uses and few properties are simply residential. Other features on the landform include the many sheds and machinery which is necessary for rural land uses.

The Herne Street wetland is surrounded down to the high water line by vines and paddocks. The wetland has some bulrush and grasses fringing the water's edge and the dark form of the Darling Ranges in the background make an attractive backdrop. Other land uses aside from vineyards are market gardening and citrus orchards. Several horse agistments also occur on the undulating plains, for example an agistment on Padbury Road is located in an area of low topography adjacent to a relatively wide section of native river vegetation. Other small enterprises include pottery and on the eastern side of Great Northern Highway there are several retail outlets such as delicatessens, and rural land uses.

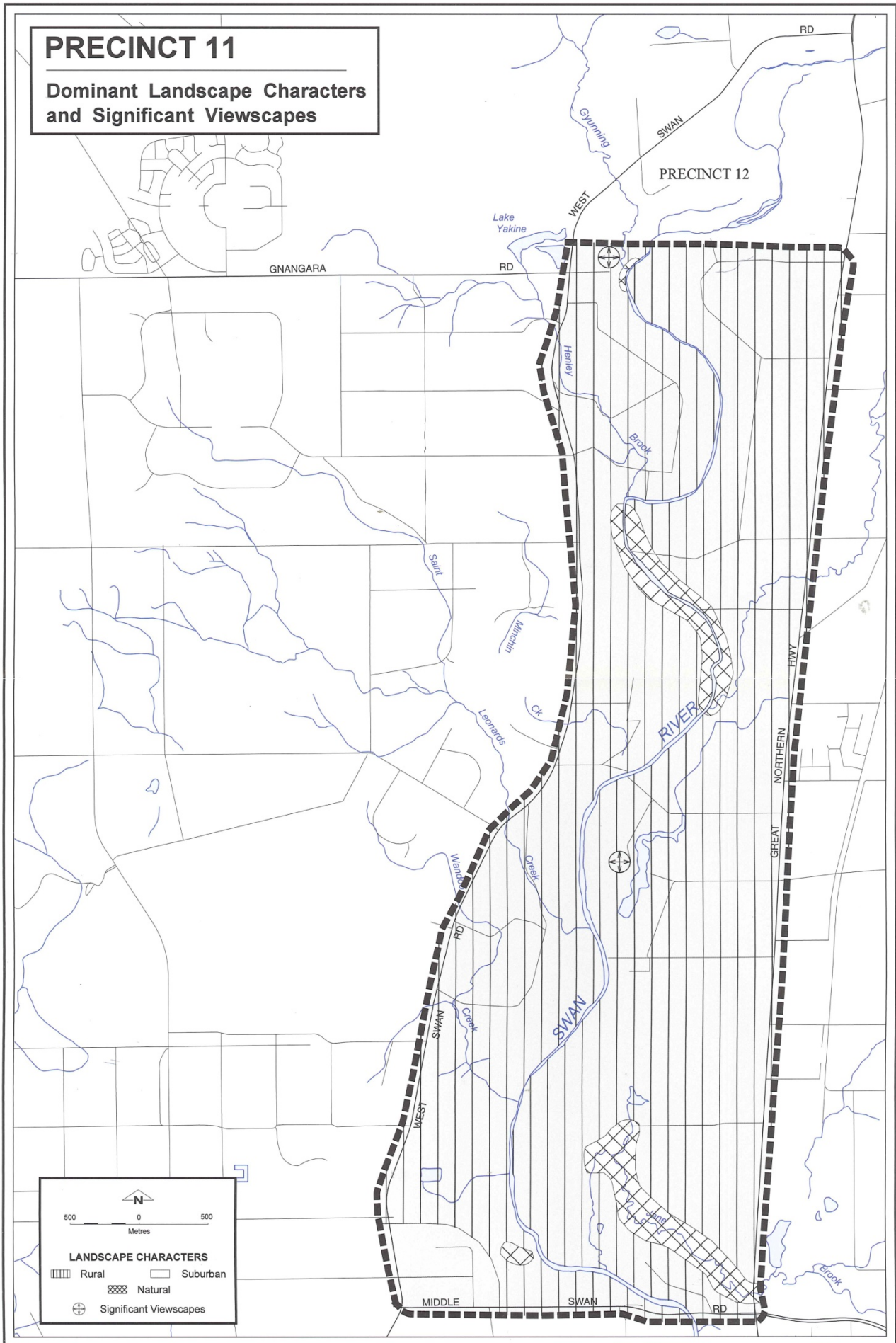
Memorial Avenue is one location in this precinct where the river channel can be viewed from the road. The fringing vegetation is mainly cleared and the nature of the more gently sloped landform allows river channel glimpses. The Baskerville Memorial Hall was built in the mid 1950s and is a red brick building with a corrugated metal roof. Several additions have been to the original building and a new car park has been constructed. A playing field and hard courts are adjacent to the road.

All Saints Church is located on a hill in front of the confluence of Ellen Brook with the Swan River. The church is a modest rectangular brick building with a small porch and sanctuary and a recently tiled roof which appears like shingles. A small bell tower is located on the end of the gabled roof. A new cottage and cloisters have been built adjacent to the churchyard and are complementary to the church building. The gardens and grave sites are neatly maintained, with annual and perennial exotic flowers. Recently, several conifers and exotic trees have been removed from around the church and new brick pathways constructed around the garden. There are several wooden benches which have been placed overlooking the Swan River valley. Unfortunately, on the adjacent southern block there is a new Federation styled house which is within the viewscape of the church and river. Consequently, the church and the hill side are no longer isolated and it may be useful to screen the new house from the churchyard.

The western side of the precinct is similarly dominated by viticulture, however several other rural land uses in the area include horse agistments, flower cultivation and small fields for livestock. Most of the houses associated with these land uses are located adjacent to the road rather than in the centre of the properties, and they range in style and age. Many of the vineyards have a small restaurant or tasting area for wine sales attached to the sheds or the homestead.

There is a higher density of houses between Coast Road and Middle Swan Road. These homes are within a recent subdivision, where most often the houses have been built from the 1980s onwards although there are several older buildings. All are typical suburban houses and gardens. Adjacent to Pow Street a wetland forms a backdrop of flooded gum and melaleuca.

The Bandyup women's prison consists of several neat low formed buildings surrounded by several cyclone fences topped with coiled wire and other security features.



Landscape Interpretation

Dominant Landscape Character

The original landscape would have been gently undulating alluvial terraces dominated by melaleuca and sedges. Away from the immediate Swan River, the undulating paleodunes and eucalyptus woodlands would have dominated the landscape. Today, although much of the original vegetation community has been cleared, the landform remains as a dominant element in the precincts landscape.

The dominant landscape character for the precinct is a rural landscape. The vineyards are the major land use in the area. Each winery has a residence and sheds clustered together giving the low density spacing of buildings which is typical of a rural landscape. Many of the residences have small orchards and vegetable gardens.

Most of the immediate river floodplain has been cleared of native vegetation and its place grasses and weeds flourish. However there are narrow belts of eucalyptus woodland and melaleuca. These very limited vegetation communities are important natural landscape elements in a precinct which has been dominated by rural use since the early days of the Swan River Colony.

Significant Viewscapes

There are several attractive views in this precinct. At All Saints Church, there is an attractive panoramic view of the old church, the fringing vegetation, the meander of the Swan River and the vineyards. At the south side of the church, a new house has been built in the viewscape. Although the house has been built in a Federation style, it appears to be too new and the lack of established garden detracts from a landscape with several historic elements.

Adjacent to the Herne Street wetlands, there is a panoramic viewscape. The view includes the fringing vegetation of the Swan River, the vineyards, the wetlands and a backdrop of the Darling Range. There are many similar attractive views of the rural landscape from the river foreshore in this precinct.

Conforming and Non Conforming Elements in the Landscape

There are several historic elements in this precincts landscape. The buildings are generally not visible on a wide viewscape, however they have historic significance and several are attractive as immediate views. Consideration of how these elements should be retained in the landscape may need to be undertaken.

The new house adjacent to All Saints has elements of the Federation style which helps link the house to a landscape which has many historic elements. However the house could be screened out of the viewscape of the river by additional planting on the southern side of the church to help maintain the unique viewscape.

The vineyards and other rural land uses such as horse agistments are an important element in the rural landscape. There is a need to examine whether subdivisions will affect the rural amenity and whether the rural landscape is an important landscape element.

Recommendations for Maintenance and Enhancement of the Present Landscape Character

- Retain indigenous and encourage planting of fringing vegetation along the stream lines and river to improve amenity and improve the ecological environment.
- Ensure that historic buildings and elements are retained and are not compromised by new developments and building styles
- Consider the value of the rural landscape. If the rural character is considered to be a defining and important feature to this section of the Swan River then ensure that the rural elements are maintained.

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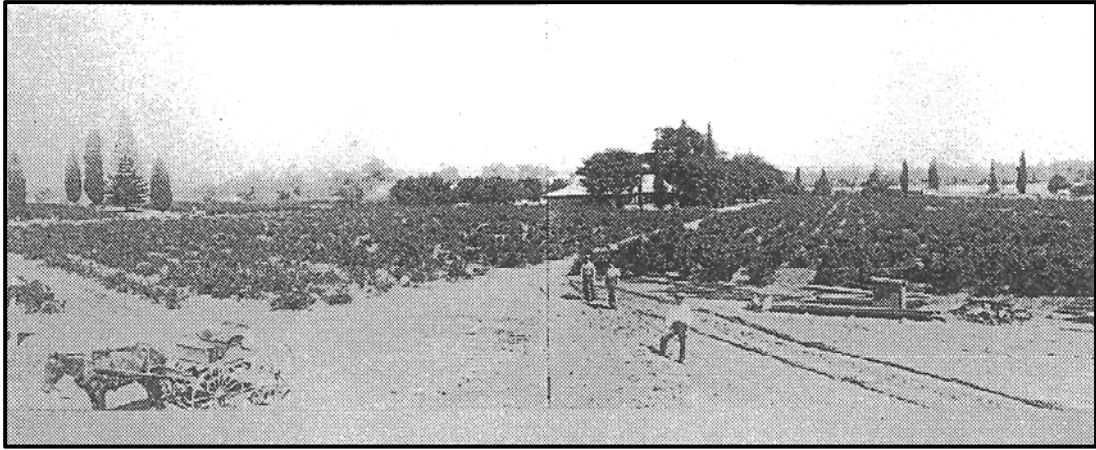
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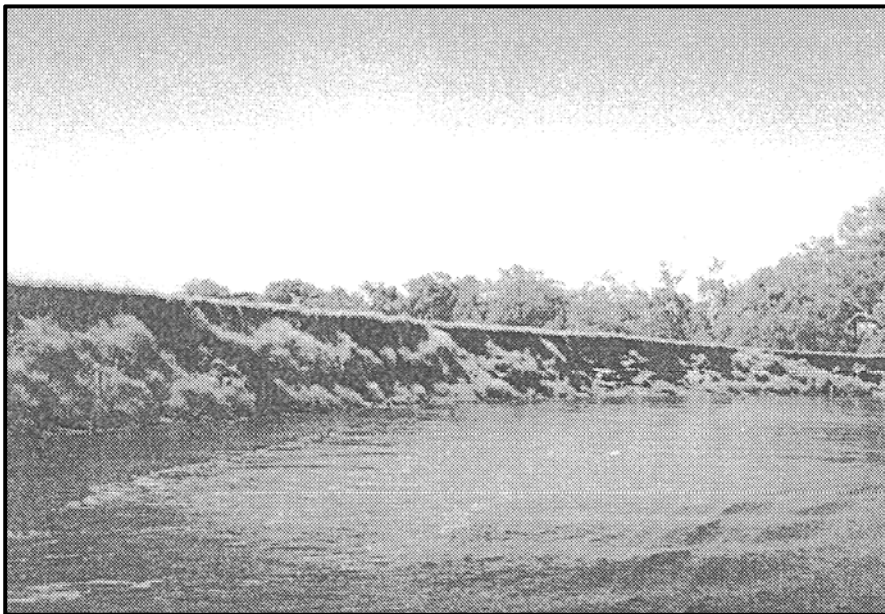
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