

- iv the variety of fences around Melville Oval should be reduced and any new fence should be either a reconstruction of the original c1910 type or either a high or low level capped corrugated iron fence,
- v where security is need a high fence should be used or a low fence with a wire fence behind it disguised by hedges,
- vi adjacent to Melville Oval, the row of *Ulmus X hollandica*, Dutch Elms in Lonsdale Street should be retained and there should be similar street trees planted on the other side of the road,
- vii street trees around Melville Oval should be traditional,
- viii traditional paving and guttering should continue to be used,
- ix a strict policy of minimal signage be followed,

#### 5.2.6 UC1 Area F St Ronan's (Level 3)

##### Description

The focus for the St Ronan's area is the house of that name at 5 Dryden Street. The large house has brooded over the town since the 1860s and once enjoyed a much larger garden. It sits on the rise above the Shire Hall and Offices. There are several other notable houses and the character of the area is predominantly domestic. The gardens of the houses, while typical of their various periods, are of a high standard. The best garden which still enjoys its original layout and probably some of the first plantings is The Bungalow, 6 Dryden Street. (303) It has the notable *Washingtonia robusta*, Mexican or Washington Palm, the highest in Hamilton.

The three other notable trees in the St Ronan's area are the *Magnolia grandiflora*, Bull Bay, at the Manor House, 4 Dryden Street; the *Waterhousea floribunda*, Weeping

303 The present owners hold a photograph of the house which must have been taken soon after its construction and which shows the original garden being laid out.

Myrtle, at St Ronan's, 5 Dryden Street; and the *Crataegus X lavellei*, French Hawthorn, at 7 Dryden Street in the rear garden.

The early garden at 32 Collins Street was once well developed and maximised the slope behind the house. Several old *Quercus robur*, English Oaks, close the view at the rear. There are the remnants of an orchard at one side and there may have a vegetable garden on the other side. The gardens associated with the other early buildings in the St Ronan's area have been mostly lost.

The most important road through this area is Pope Street, the main road to the west. It is now a divided highway with plantings typical of the late 1960s reflecting the fashion for natives at that time. Dryden Street is the principle residential street and is planted *Lagunaria pattersonia*, Cow Itch Tree on the north side and *Prunus serrulata*, Flowering Cherry on the south side. The former is a traditional street tree but the latter reflects the push to make Hamilton the "Floral Town" in the post Second World War period. They are out of scale and out of period. Collins Street is planted with *Photinia serrulata*, Chinese Hawthorn, and *Crataegus laevigata*, English Hawthorn, both of which are small trees but these are well formed and, if a small street tree is required, the *Photinia* provides a good model.

Throughout the area the footpaths and gutters are concrete dating from the post Second World War period. There are narrow nature strips. The most important view from the St Ronan's area is across the former Market Reserve which is now the Melville Oval. The view east along Collins Street is soon terminated but the view west is good and looks out across the valley of the Grange Burn and over agricultural land to windbreak trees on the horizon.

## History

The St Ronan's area is one of the oldest and most important parts of Hamilton, dating from its origin as the Dundas Roads Board and because of its position at the western entrance to the town. Several key buildings add distinction to the area. Firstly there is St Ronan's which was formerly a post office in Gray Street. The materials were purchased and it was rebuilt in 1876 by Sigismund Jacoby, a leading draper and one-time mayor of

Hamilton. (304) The building had a succession of owners and uses, all important to Hamilton's history. Nearby is the Manor House which was built in 1862 and possibly designed by its first owner, the Shire Engineer. Both these houses had strong medical connections.

Also dating from the Victorian period but rather later are The Academy, a Catholic girls school, and the Baptist Church which are both in Collins Street. The Academy is interesting for both its architecture, again domestic in character, and its history. The Church is a simple example of the Gothic revival which is an unusual choice for this denomination.

The area would have benefitted from the beautification of the nearby Melville Oval before the First World War. It enjoyed some redevelopment in the interwar period including the construction of Mourilyan, at 22 Pope Street, a building which dominates the entrance to the old township because of its size and location. There has been little development since then until a certain amount of renovation on the early cottages, some of which is of dubious quality.

### Statement of Significance

The St Ronan's area is of local significance for both its architecture and its historic associations. It includes an important collection of buildings ranging in date from the earliest period of Hamilton's settlement to the interwar period and gardens which compliment the significance of the individual buildings. The planting and domestic scale of the St Ronan's area are critical and promote, with the topography, an important view to and from the centre of Hamilton.

### Recommendations

To conserve and enhance the special character of the St Ronan's area it is recommended that:

- i the existing street plantings which date from before the Second World War be retained and extended in a comparable manner,

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304 Ibid, p 86-7.

- ii traditional paving and guttering continue to be used including the absence of footpaths in some streets,
- iii a strict policy of minimal signage be followed,
- iv no non-residential uses should be allowed to compromise the essentially residential character of the area,
- v wherever possible the intrusion of powerlines should be minimised if they cannot be removed,
- vi the views out of the area should be enhanced by appropriate planting.

### 5.3 Conservation Areas (Natural)

#### 5.3.1 UC2 Area G Grange Burn

##### Description

The Grange Burn meanders around the town in a large arc from the north-east to the west after turning south and then north. It is never more than a small stream although it has now been dammed and forms Lake Hamilton. The banks vary from open and flat floodplains to quite steep cliffs especially at the southern end of the original township. The Grange Burn area has two characters; the one which is more natural or informal and the other which has been laid out to some design. The latter are reserves which are for deliberate recreation purposes and include Lake Hamilton, the Apex Park, Kennedy Park and Victoria Park. The rest of the creek seems to be left more or less to fend for itself.

It is not possible to say within the scope of this study how much of the existing vegetation along the Grange Burn is remnant and indeed likewise throughout Hamilton. However, there are considerable sections which are overgrown with thickets of elm suckers and other weeds. The formal reserves have quite elaborate plantings. These have now deteriorated but not irretrievably. The relationship between Victoria Park and the Botanic Gardens deserves to be explored in detail.

The most important formal area along the Grange Burn is Victoria Park. High ground on the Martin Street side