

## Victorian Heritage Database place details - 16/4/2021

### Concrete Housing Estate Precinct

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**Location:**

Leith Avenue and Hampshire Road SUNSHINE, Brimbank City

**Heritage Overlay Number:** HO020

**Listing Authority:** HO

**Precinct**

Concrete Housing Estate Precinct

**Extent of Registration:**

**Statement of Significance:**

The Leith Avenue precinct is of regional historic and architectural significance as an interesting example of a planned building settlement, under the auspices of the Sunshine Harvester Works, though financed with Victorian State Savings Bank backing. The precinct is of architectural significance for the early and rare use of concrete in the construction of the houses, which was still quite an innovation in 1924, although some concrete houses had been built in Sunshine by 1910. The spaciousness of the lay-out of Leith Avenue suggests the influence of Garden City planning principles.

The precinct is of historical significance as one of the more recognisable examples of the planned urban development that characterise much of early Sunshine's suburban expansion during the period under McKay's influence in the early 20th century. It is also significant for its association with the State Bank of Victoria as one of a number of interwar housing schemes. While much smaller than the Garden City Estate, there are interesting parallels with it in relation to garden city design principles and the experimental building methods such as the use of off-form and prefabricated concrete.

## Description

This small estate of concrete houses has an unusual form of street layout, featuring a court constructed with concrete road, kerb and channel around an oblong central grassed median. Houses on the south side are concrete-walled with tiled roofs. Others on the north side have been demolished, partly for expansion of the adjacent secondary college, in the days when it was Sunshine Technical School. There are eight surviving houses at 1 to 15 Leith Avenue and also four houses surviving at 51 - 57 Hampshire Road. Three of the surviving houses in Leith Ave feature notable faceted chimney shafts. 17 Leith Ave. was demolished some years ago, probably at the same time as the houses on the north side of the street. The estate was originally symmetrical.

Of the six house designs prepared for the State Savings Bank by GB Leith, illustrated in *The Australian Home Builder*, three survive in the estate. Type 1 is block-fronted with a simple hipped roof. It has overhanging eaves at the centre of the facade, creating a window hood above the windows, resting on triangular timber brackets. Windows are paired six-over-one sashes in boxed (projecting) frames. These houses have decorative timber porches on the side elevation. Another distinctive feature of these houses is the narrow faceted cast-concrete chimneys.

Type 2 has a wide hipped-roof bay at the front with a recessed porch beneath it. The porch is lit by a window-like opening on the facade. The windows of this type of house are set into moulded render surrounds.

There is one surviving house with a California Bungalow form (Type 3), on Hampshire Road. Its most distinctive feature is a half-timbered gable-roofed porch at the front. The porch is supported on three pairs of timber posts, which in turn rest on low rendered piers.

There have been a few alterations to the house, primarily the replacement of the timber box windows with aluminium units (at 11-15 Leith Ave; 53 Hampshire Rd).

The timber post and woven wire fences visible in the 1925 photos are mainly gone, but a few sections on the sides of front yards survive (at 9 Leith Ave, 53 Hampshire Rd).

ADDRESS, PLACE, DATE:

51 Hampshire Road, Concrete House, 1925

53 Hampshire Road, Concrete House, 1925

55 Hampshire Road, Timber House with fake brick cladding, 1930s

57 Hampshire Road, Concrete House, 1925

1 Leith Avenue, Concrete House, 1925

3 Leith Avenue Concrete House, 1925

5 Leith Avenue Concrete House, 1925

7 Leith Avenue Concrete House, 1925

9 Leith Avenue Concrete House, 1925

11 Leith Avenue Concrete House, 1925

13 Leith Avenue Concrete House, 1925

15 Leith Avenue Concrete House, 1925

One house on the south side of Leith Avenue has been demolished and is now only a vacant lot:

17 Leith Avenue Vacant (house demolished)

While more than half of the estate has been demolished (the entire north half and one of the south side) the remaining houses are quite intact, and form a consistent streetscape. Typical alterations include the replacement of original timber windows and box frames with aluminium units and the enclosure of porches. Substantially intact.

4 Building settlement, towns and cities

4.1 Planning urban settlements

Heritage Study	2000 - Brimbank - Brimbank City Council Post-contact Cultural Heritage Study
Year Construction Started	1924
Architect / Designer	
Architectural Style	

Heritage Act Categories	
Municipality	["BRIMBANK CITY", "BRIMBANK CITY"]
Other names	
History	