

# Mount Martha Public Golf Course Strategic Review



## A Brief History

### Previous land owners

The Mount Martha Golf Course is situated on land originally occupied by Boon Wurrung of the Kulin nation, aboriginal people who inhabited land along Port Philip Bay and Westernport, from Werribee to Wilson's Promontory. After European settlement Parliamentarian, Alfred Downward, owned the property around 1900 when it was described as 1269 acres of the Mount Martha Estate. This site was called Kensington Valley on the estate plans and Hopetoun Road was one of the estate's main arteries.

Following subdivision, the site was part of the Greenlaw Estate, a 722-acre farm estate owned by Sir George Fairbairn, who was senator for Victoria 1917-23. He raised Suffolk sheep there from 1906.

### Other golf courses in Mount Martha

There were several golf courses in Mount Martha in the early 1900s serving guest houses such as Mount Martha House, which was built in 1890. Originally known as the Mount Martha Coffee Palace and the Martha Hotel, the house operated as a holiday and golfing destination for Melbourne's wealthy.

Maryport golfing and country club with a 9 hole golf course was semi-private, located adjacent to Mount Martha House. It was known also as Mount Martha Golf Links. The course covered what is now Irvine Avenue, Leggat Crescent and Prescott Avenue. Prescott Avenue was previously known as Golf Links Road. See image to the left. The house at 47 Prescott Avenue (Camelot) is the former Maryport Golf Clubhouse. Evidence of this former golf course can be seen in the pines that once lined the fairways.

There was also The Dava Golf links, associated with Dava lodge, existed between the Esplanade and Nepean Highway north of Bentons Road in Mount Martha.

By World War 2 Mount Martha House had fallen into disrepair, and was being used for the collection of deliveries, ration books, voting papers and even as a lost dogs home. The house was sold in 1948, saving it from redevelopment. The golf course was sold for residential development in 1948.

Following the subdivision of Greenlaw farm in 1958 development proposals provided for a private, 9-hole course adjacent to the Greenlaw homestead, however this was deemed as unsatisfactory. It was instead suggested that 125 acres of the estate be made available to Council, provided Council developed a full golf course. The suggestion was adopted, the developer agreed to donate the land, and the land was rezoned to public open space in late 1967.

### Heritage significance

The Mornington Shire Heritage Study Significant Sites and Areas 1993 cites the heritage significance of the Mount Martha Public Golf Course site as "The mature exotic trees, dating

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from prior to the golf course, are significant within the Mornington Peninsula as symbols of the Fairbairn's extensive Greenlaw Estate and, in concept, the Mount Martha Estate which preceded him.

They are easily distinguished from the mixed native and exotic plantings around them because of their size, maturity, rarity and distinctive shape, marking the taste in specimen trees of turn of the century gentlemen farmers and the former pastoral use of this golf course."



*Figure 1 Overlay of the 1957 and 2020 aerial photos to highlight the location of the original trees*

A few remaining mature exotic trees (Californian redwood, stone pines, Araucaria sp.', cypress etc.) along the roadways and in the eastern corner are evidence of the former Greenlaw farm. The photo montage above overlays the 1957 photo over a 2020 photo to highlight remaining trees.

The ones remaining are shown in the following aerals from Google Earth 2020.

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*Figure 2 Location of remaining trees from 1957 shown in Google Earth, 2020*

## **The current golf course**

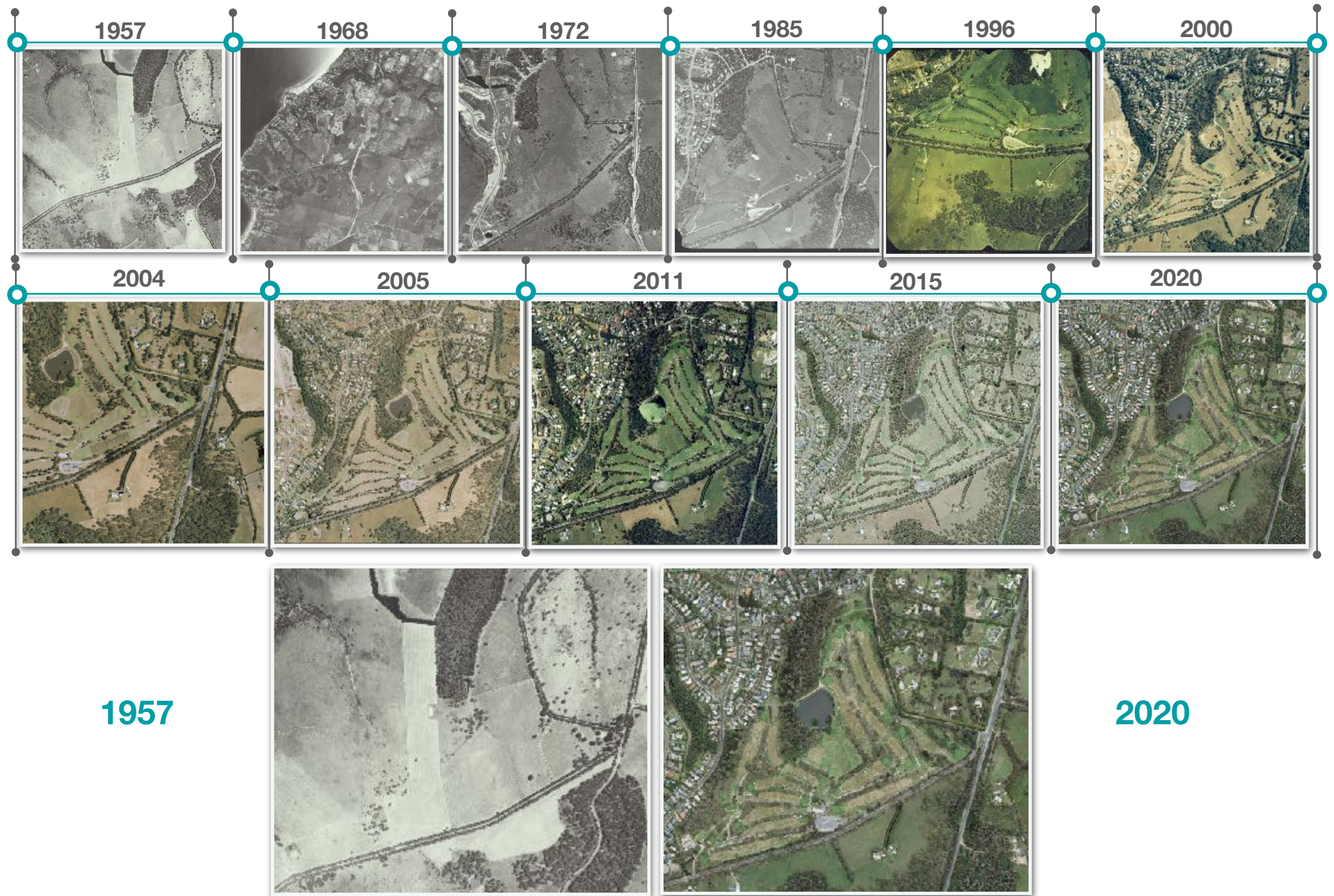
The current golf course was designed in 1974, officially opened in 1977, the pavilion was constructed and completed in 1980, and in the very same year a Club was formed, and the Mount Martha Golf Club hosted its first tournament.

Construction of the golf course was estimated at \$274,000 at the end of 1977. In 1987 the course nines were reversed, pushing the back 9 holes to the front 9, and vice-versa.

Today, the Mount Martha Golf Club has 230+ members, ranging from 15 to 90+. The Club encourages community, with 90% of all members living in Mount Martha, Mornington, Dromana or Mount Eliza. The Club presents itself as “the Friendly and Affordable Golf Club on the Peninsula”.



Figure 3 Aerial images of the Mount Martha Public Golf Course site 1957 - 2020



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## References

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8. 1993.
9. Environmental History for the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council. Graeme Butler and
10. Associates. Sept 2008
11. 9. The Reserves Early Settlement, Mount Martha Balcombe Estuary Rehabilitation Group.
12. 10. Image: Mount Martha Golf Links Circa 1947. Image Source: Mount Martha House Historical
13. Collection
14. 11. Aerial photos provided by Mornington Peninsula Shire.

*Mornington Peninsula Shire acknowledges and pays respect to the Bunurong / BoonWurrung people, the traditional custodians of these lands and waters.*

