‘Hillview’

**1104 Malvern Road, Armadale**

Place type: Residential Buildings (private), Villa  
Significance level: Local  

Recommended protection: Planning Scheme  
Architectural style: Victorian period (1851-1901) Italianate

**Locality history**

The locality of Armadale emerged in the 1870s at the eastern end of Toorak. The suburb straddled both the older municipality of Prahran and the newer one of Malvern, with Boundary Road (now Kooyong Road) marking the boundary between the two. The name Armadale derived from the name of the grand residence of Victorian politician James Munro, ‘Armadale House’, built in 1876. Other mansions and fine villas followed, including ‘Brocklesby’ (1879) and ‘Flete’ (1882-83). Along Orrong Road, between High Street and Dandenong Road, an impressive row of five mansions was built for some of Melbourne’s leading businessmen in the 1880s. These were ‘Larnook’, ‘Redcourt’, ‘Sebrof’, ‘Lalbert’ and ‘Kabratook’ (demolished) (Foster, 1996).

Through the 1880s, Armadale was promoted as an exclusive residential area for the middle class, with subdivisions offering generous suburban allotments. A railway station had opened at Armadale in 1879 to service the new Oakleigh railway line and this was used as a drawcard to attract buyers to the area. Much of Armadale’s housing stock reflects its foundational period of the 1880s and early 1890s. As well as the large ornate homes of the wealthy, there were streets of comfortable middle-class suburban homes, including double-storey terrace rows, along with pockets of smaller, more modest homes, including some working-class cottages.

Commercial development along High Street, including shops and other services, served the surrounding residential area. The Prahran and Malvern Tramways Board established a tram route along High Street to the city in the early 1900s. In the 1930s and 1940s, as more and more of the large homes in the area were broken up and the land subdivided, antique furniture
was in oversupply. In the 1940s the shops in High Street began to carry antiques and *objets d’art*, catering for an upper-middle-class clientele, and laying the foundation for what later became a high-end shopping strip.

From the early twentieth century, many of Melbourne’s large mansion homes set in large garden settings became unsustainable. Large estates were subdivided for residential development, and sometimes the house survived on a much reduced allotment. Large private homes were also converted into multiple dwellings or ‘flats’, or operated as boarding houses. Large houses were also converted for use as private hospitals (for example ‘Alencon’) and schools (for example, ‘Brocklesby’ and ‘Blairholme’).

**Place history**

The double-storey Victorian residence at 1104 Malvern Road (formerly 46 Malvern Road), Armadale, known as ‘Hillview’, was built for the notable Australian cricketer Thomas Patrick Horan (1854-1916). In 1886 Horan purchased allotment no. 10, facing Malvern Road, on the elevated ‘Malvern Hill Estate’, which was described in the sale notice of 1881 as ‘Magnificent’ (Wilkinson 1881).

By December 1887 Horan had erected a 10-roomed brick house on the site (RB).

Irish-born Horan settled in Victoria as a child and became a leading batsman; he was selected for the Ashes tour of England in 1878 and was also a member of the Australian team in 1882. Horan was employed as a civil servant in the Victorian Government audit office but also worked as a cricket writer for the *Australasian* until his death in 1916. His writings were extremely popular with readers (*Argus* 17 April 1916). He remains the only Irish-born cricketer
to play Test cricket for Australia. Thomas Horan married Catherine Pennefather in 1878 and they had nine children. Two of Thomas and Catherine’s sons, James and Thomas, also played first-class cricket for Victoria.

The house was an imposing double-storey villa featuring an ornate cast-iron return verandah to three sides of the house and polychromatic brickwork. The architect or builder is not known.

The house, as shown on the MMBW detail plan of 1902, shows a detached residence on a comfortable suburban allotment, with an outside lavatory (and what looks to be a wash house).

After Horan’s death in 1916, his widow Catherine remained at the house. In July 1918, Catherine Horan sold the house, which was then numbered 46 Malvern Road, to Harry Cooper Bagot. Bagot occupied the property, which was re-numbered 1104 Malvern Road, until 1955, when it was sold to J.B. Wilson (Foster, c.1996-2000).

**Figure 2. MMBW Detail Plan no. 1761, dated 1902 (source: SLV).**

**Figure 3. A caricature of Tom Horan produced to coincide with the 1878 Ashes Tour of England, created by the artist Ans using a photograph and sketch (source: SLV).**

**Figure 4. Photograph of house at 1104 Malvern Rd, Armadale in 1992, taken for the Malvern Heritage Study (source: Nigel Lewis, 1992).**

**Sources**

1104 Malvern Road, Armadale Citation L47(D) Panel, 1999.

*Argus* 17 April 1916.

Physical description

The residence known as ‘Hillview’ at 1104 Malvern Road is a substantial two-storey polychrome brick residence that occupies a deep allotment on the south side of Malvern Road, mid-block between Adelaide Street and Glenferrie Road in Armadale. The house is set back from the main road behind a high masonry wall and an established garden. A modern driveway runs down the east boundary of the property and terminates at a contemporary two-storey weatherboard garage/outbuilding detached at the rear of the main house.

Constructed in 1887-1888, the building is highly intact and is notable for its elaborate detailing and strong three dimensional expression, created by the two-storey verandah that returns on three sides around the central projecting wing that is centred to the front of the building. The building has a hipped roof, clad in slate tiles. The verandah dominates the presentation of the house to the street and gives the impression of a pavilion when viewed in elevation. The verandah is of a high quality and has a range of intricate cast-iron patterns including a highly detailed balustrade to the first floor balcony and fluted cast-iron columns. Large dentil mouldings to the verandah beams add further embellishment to the composition.
The bichrome brick patterning is restrained with cream brick dressings against the red brick walls used to emphasise openings and corners, and as a continuous band below the brick eaves brackets. The bichrome patterning is also continuous to the visible chimney with unpainted cement render mouldings.

The ground floor windows beneath the verandah are impressive full-height segmentally arched double-hung sashes with bluestone sills at the tiled verandah level. Other visible windows of the house are segmentally arched double-hung sashes, apart from one round-arched sash window to the north-east first floor corner (east elevation). The front door appears to be intact, complete with highlights and sidelights, although the original decorative glazing may have been lost.

The exterior is highly intact and despite the high masonry front wall that conceals much of the house from Malvern Road, the original curtilage and setbacks remain evident.

**Comparative analysis**

Although many single-storey villas were built in Melbourne and its suburbs during the 19th century, after the 1840s the grandest houses were almost always of two-storeys, or occasionally three as at Government House and ‘Cliveden’. Owners often added a-storey to their single-storey house as their fortunes improved, for example, ‘Como’ in South Yarra had a second-storey added by 1855. Towards the end of the century, there was an increasing tendency to prefer the higher status of a two-storey house over that of a single-storey one (Jordan 2003:117 as cited in Statham 2008).

The architectural expression of a grand two-storey Victorian house could reflect any one of a range of fashionable British antecedents drawing their inspiration from classical Greek, Roman or Georgian sources to the more picturesque, such as Gothic or Tudor. British country houses of the mid-nineteenth century drew predominantly from the range of Picturesque styles. About a third of these grand Victorian houses adopted an Italianate style combining informal massing with a plain rendered expression enriched by classical motifs. The balance adopted a formal symmetrical classical expression. The Italianate was seen to combine the stateliness of a classical style with a picturesque and fashionable asymmetry (Jordan 2003:117 as cited in Statham 2008).
The Italianate style had its origins in the landscape paintings of Nicholas Poussin and Claude Lorrain over a century earlier. These two French artists were enamoured with the landscapes and architecture of rural Italy, depicting it as a vision of Arcadia. Their efforts inspired a broader pursuit of ‘the Picturesque’ in architecture (Statham, 2008).

Through the first half of the nineteenth century, the Italianate style spread widely in Britain fuelled by the works of architects such as John Nash and Charles Barry and through designs promoted in pattern books such as Charles Parker’s *Villa Rustica* (1832). In 1845, the style received Royal endorsement when Prince Albert, working with architect Thomas Cubitt, designed ‘Osbourne’ on the Isle of Wight as a retreat for Queen Victoria and the Royal family. ‘Osbourne’ with its plain stuccoed expression and tall balustraded tower would become the model for many large residences throughout the Empire including Government House in Melbourne.

The style, which emerged as the preferred expression for Melbourne’s grandest mansions of the mid-century, was quickly adapted to suit more modest suburban villas and terraces. As Hubbard (2012:357) notes:

*Flexibility and adaptability were the secrets to the success of the Italianate style. It could range from the simplest of buildings to the grandest. It was not a precise style and could accommodate different levels of architectural sophistication. It could be formally symmetrical or informally asymmetrical. While towers were standard, they might be reduced to just a porch. The style was easy to copy and could be used by speculative builders buying stock items for decoration. Most importantly, the Italianate style used the vocabulary of classical architecture freely but sparingly, generally with relatively plain expanses of wall and hipped roofs with bracketed eaves.*

The Italianate house is so common in the Melbourne area that this is the standard image people hold of the ‘Victorian house’. Condensed to its key features, they would be a hipped roof with an M-profile (i.e. having a central valley to the rear half, which allows a low ridgeline), bracketed eaves, chimneys with a cornice at the top (a run cement-render moulding), and a timber or iron-framed verandah with cast-iron ornament to all but the grandest houses. Common extras included a faceted (canted) bay used to create an asymmetric composition (or occasionally used symmetrically), and windows that had a round or segmental arched opening, some of which were embellished with run cement-render mouldings or delicate hood moulds.

There were three general types of cladding for Italianate houses. The most modest were clad in timber weatherboards or blocked boards emulating expensive ashlar. The two most common types were finished in cement render or face brick. Rendered houses could obtain a high level of run and cast ornament at an affordable price, leading to some highly embellished examples. All, even the most modest, had ruled render with incised lines to emulate the more expensive stone construction. Face brickwork was also common, usually dark brown Hawthorn bricks with cream brick dressings (bichrome) from the late 1860s, and later in the century with red brick accents as well (polychrome). Some architects and designer-builders created bold patterns with the coloured bricks. As good building stone was not common in Victoria, very few houses were built of stone. Early examples were of bluestone, such as the grand ‘Bishopscourt’ in East Melbourne.

The development of the former City of Prahran and the western part of the former City of Malvern coincides with the emergence of the Italianate forms of expression in Victoria. Consequently, the City of Stonnington retains a disproportionate number of Melbourne’s better examples of the mode. A number of these, typically the grandest and most elaborate mansions or those associated with Victoria’s most notable families, have been added to the Victorian Heritage Register. These include: ‘Toorak House’, ‘Greenwich House’ and ‘Mandeville Hall’, in Toorak; ‘Stonington’ in Malvern; and ‘Malvern House’ in Glen Iris.

Examples of substantial Italianate houses that are of individual significance in Stonnington’s Heritage Overlay (both in individual HOs and HO precincts) can be divided into a number of groups according to architectural composition and plan form, their size, ornament and level of architectural sophistication. Generally, ‘Hillview’ can be compared with other substantial symmetrical Italianate villas of the 1880s. Comparable examples include:
• 61 Rose Street, Armadale (in HO130) - a substantial two-storey Italianate villa with an unusual asymmetrical footprint (Z-plan) and two-storey cast-iron verandah on two sides. The polychrome brickwork has cream trim to dark Hawthorn bricks to articulate openings and building corners.

• 85 Rose Street, Armadale (in HO130) – a two-storey Italianate villa with a similar rectangular plan, bichrome brickwork and a two-storey cast-iron verandah to the front façade only.

• 6 Grandview Grove, Prahran (in HO135) – two-storey rendered Italianate villa with a hipped slate roof and large chimneys with bold cornice mouldings. The building has a return verandah with the front entrance in the rear projecting side wing.

• 23 Grandview Grove, Prahran (in HO135) – a grand two-storey Italianate villa with a hipped slate roof, cement render finish and an elaborate two-storey cast-iron verandah expressed entirely to the front façade.

In comparison to the Italianate villas listed above, ‘Hillview’ is most similar to the stepped plan forms of 61 Rose Street, Armadale, and 6 Grandview Grove, Prahran. These examples have a two-storey cast-iron verandah on two sides only compared to three at ‘Hillview’. These examples fall short of the dramatic effect of ‘Hillview’s’ forward projecting wing surrounded by the encircling two-storey verandah on three sides. ‘Hillview’ compares favourably to the other examples in level of intactness, and shares a similar expression of cream trim to dark Hawthorn bricks as seen at 61 Rose Street, Armadale.

Figure 6. 61 Rose Street, Armadale, significant in HO130 (source: Google Streetview)

In conclusion, ‘Hillview’ is as intact and architecturally sophisticated as these examples, if not grander than some. It occupies a wide allotment on Malvern Road and presents a prominent projecting centre bay enclosed by a verandah that returns on three sides. The verandah dominates the presentation of the house to the street and gives the impression of a pavilion when viewed in elevation.

Thematic context

This place illustrates the following themes, as identified in the Stonnington Thematic Environmental History (Context Pty Ltd, rev. 2009):
Assessment against criteria

Assessment of this place was carried out in relation to the HERCON model criteria as set out in the VPP Practice Note ‘Applying the Heritage Overlay’ (2015).

Statement of significance

What is significant?
‘Hillview’, a grand Victorian villa at 1104 Malvern Road, Armadale, built c.1887-88 for the notable Australian cricketer Thomas Patrick Horan, is significant. Thomas Horan (1854-1916) was former captain of the Australian cricket team who remains the only Irish-born Australian Test cricketer. He also worked as a cricket writer for the *Australian* until his death in 1916.

The house is two storeys in height with an unusual three-sided verandah to the central projecting wing. It is highly intact and its presentation to the public realm, including generous setback within the established garden, is significant.

Modern additions and extensions such as the garage and high masonry front fence are not significant.

How is it significant?
‘Hillview’ at 1104 Malvern Road, Armadale is of local architectural and aesthetic significance, and historical interest to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?
Architecturally, ‘Hillview’, at 1104 Malvern Road, Armadale is an excellent and intact example of a prestigious and substantial Victorian residence of the sort that were beginning to characterise the suburb of Armadale in the 1880s. It is Italianate in style with characteristic features including the M-profile hipped roof with bracketed eaves and clad in slate, with cast iron verandah, segmentally arched windows and bichrome brickwork patterning. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, ‘Hillview’ is distinguished by its prominent three-sided verandah that encircles the central projecting wing. The verandah dominates the presentation of the house to the street and gives the impression of a pavilion when viewed in elevation. It is of a high quality and has a range of intricate cast-iron patterns including a highly detailed balustrade to the first floor balcony, fluted cast-iron columns and dentilated verandah beams. (Criterion E)

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay to the extent of the whole property as defined by the title boundaries.

HO Schedule controls: None
Figure 7: Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 1104 Malvern Road, Armadale (source: www.land.vic.gov.au).

Recommended grading: A2