History and Historical Context

Thematic Context

The following is drawn from the Stonnington Thematic Environmental History (Context Pty Ltd, 2006).

‘Country in the City’ - suburban development in Malvern before World War I

Melbourne’s prosperity through the latter half of the nineteenth century, coupled with the growth of its public transport system, allowed many Victorians to opt for a home in the fresh air and tranquillity of the suburbs away from the noise and dirt of the city. With the subdivision of large mansion sites in the suburbs, new middle-class enclaves emerged populated by businessmen and their families pursuing the suburban ideal of a *rus en urbe* (country in the city). For most suburbanites, this meant a detached single-storey house surrounded by its own garden. These developments became common in the former City of Prahran but it was in the neighbouring City of Malvern that the suburban ideal was to find its fullest expression.¹ Here streets of villas rapidly began to replace market gardens, especially in the vicinity of the railway line to Oakleigh which opening in 1879 with stations at Malvern and Armadale.

The arrival of the railway line triggered commercial expansion near Armadale station and the subdivision and residential development of the surrounding area. The character of the development varied. Small timber and brick workers cottages and residences, and some terraces and duplexes, were typically constructed closer to the railway lines. More substantial family dwellings and mansions were typically constructed further away from the station, predominantly of brick, on large blocks of land. The entry for Armadale in the 1893 Australian Handbook declared that ‘views from some points are enchanting, and it is one of the favourite resorts of wealthy Melbourne men, and a great number of fine mansions and villa residences in the locality.’²

¹ Stonnington Thematic Environmental History, p.125-7.
Place History

Land on the south side of Malvern Road (east of Kooyong Road) was first acquired by William Bushby Jones at the Crown land sales in 1866. Jones commissioned architect Lloyd Tayler to build a two-storey mansion ‘Brocklesby’, which was built fronting Malvern Road (now demolished). Jones purchased two adjacent allotments at the corner of Kooyong Road in 1885, and the following year the Brocklesby estate was subdivided, creating Erskine Street, Murray Street, ‘Horsburgh Grove’ and the northern end of Huntingtower Road. Jones purchased two adjacent allotments at the corner of Kooyong Road in 1885, and the following year the Brocklesby estate was subdivided, creating Erskine Street, Murray Street, ‘Horsburgh Grove’ and the northern end of Huntingtower Road. Lots 1, 2 and adjoining lot 3 of the Brocklesby Estate were acquired c1886 by merchant Donald McVean (alternatively spelt MacVean in some historical sources). McVean had built a fifteen room house on the site by 1887 (shown as ‘villa residence’ on a 1887 plan of the Brocklesby Estate). An auction notice of November 1887 announced that the Brocklesby Estate was ‘surrounded by the best mansions in the district’ and was within five minutes’ walk of Armadale railway station. From c1890 to c1895, McVean’s house was occupied by Matthew Jamieson. In the late 1890s and early 1900s the occupant was W A McClure Smith. An 1902 MMBW plan shows the house, named ‘Tuena’, on a large property on the corner of Malvern Road and Murray Street with a sweeping gravel driveway to the front and coach house to the rear.

Figure 2  Extract from an 1887 plan of the Brocklesby Estate showing a ‘Villa residence’ on present day 1026 Malvern Road. The original extent of the property is shaded red. Source: State Library of Victoria.

3 Stonnington Local History Catalogue, Reg. No. MH10681.
4 State Library of Victoria ‘Brocklesby Estate’ [cartographic material].
5 Sands and McDougall Directories.
6 State Library of Victoria, MMBW Detail Plan No. 1763.
Figure 3 (left) 1902 MMBW plan. Source: State Library of Victoria.
Figure 4 (right) Recent aerial photograph.

Figure 5 A 1992 photograph of Teuna showing a non-original entry porch on the front verandah.
Description

Tuena is a single-storey Victorian Italianate style villa with rendered masonry walls and a hipped slate roof. It has multiple canted bay windows to the front rooms producing an usually elaborate building footprint and roof form. An elegant verandah with cast iron posts and frieze wraps around façade. The main roof has paired eaves brackets and rendered chimneys with moulded cornices and flue fins.

Various unsympathetic alterations had been made to the house by 1992, including the construction of a gable roof entry porch and the removal of all cast iron from the verandah. A small single-storey addition was made to east side of the house, replacing the conservatory shown on the 1902 MMBW plan.

The house has been restored in recent decades with the entry porch addition removed and verandah detailing reinstated. There is a modern garage in the front garden and a high solid masonry wall to the Malvern Road boundary. The property has been reduced in extent with land to the east and rear of the house having been subdivided and redeveloped.

The architect or designer of Tuena has not been confirmed. The plan form and façade composition are very similar to the nearby villa Blairholme, 1034 Malvern Road (now part of Lauriston Girl’s School) suggesting that it was work of the same architect. Context Pty Ltd have attributed the design of Blairholme to noted architect Lloyd Tayler on stylistic grounds and because of Tayler had designed a number of building for William Jones, it also being the case that Blairholme was built on Jones’ Brocklesby estate for his daughter and son-in-law.7

Comparative Analysis

The Italianate style

The Italianate style had its origins in the landscape paintings of Nicholas Poussin and Claude Lorrain over a century earlier. These artists had reconsidered the landscapes and architecture of rural Italy as a vision of Arcadia and inspired a broader pursuit of ‘the Picturesque’ in architecture. As Apperly notes:

… the Picturesque movement in architecture and landscape design gained strength in Britain without ever completely forgetting its Franco-Italic beginnings. From this movement, a significant strand of nineteenth century domestic architecture emerged that endeavoured to establish a vaguely Italian ambiance drawing on images of the rambling farmhouses of the Campagna and idyllic villas in the Tuscan countryside.8

Through the first half of the nineteenth century, the mode spread widely in Britain fueled 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.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the formal classical styles were more popular in Victoria than they were in Britain. As Kerry Jordan notes:

Grand houses in Victoria prior to 1850s tended to adopt the formal and symmetrical Colonial Georgian or Regency expression. However the Italianate became the most

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7 Context Pty Ltd, ‘Blairholme’ citation prepared for Amendment C243 (undated), p. 3.
popular style for grand houses in Victoria in the second half of the century … The choice in 1854 of the Italianate Toorak House as the residence of the Governor of Victoria as well as the choice of an Italianate style for the new Government House in 1871, gave the style more status making it more fashionable than any other in the colony.9

While status undoubtedly played a part in the demand for this mode of expression, there were also practical advantages in an Italianate approach. Jordan continues:

… the detailing to doors and window framing were identical to the common English way of building with which local tradesmen were already familiar. Given the scarcity of skilled tradesmen in the colony, to build in any other way would therefore have been … difficult and expensive. A classical style house could also be built in any material even in cheaper ones which could then be covered with stucco.10

Consequently, 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 Apperly notes:

The Italianate style was never an 'academic' idiom. As a style of domestic architecture in Australia, Victorian Italianate made minimal reference to Italy. Mouldings and minor details usually had a classical feeling, but two of the style’s prominent characteristics - the faceted bay and the stilted segmental arch - were not specifically Italian at all. A Victorian Italianate building of any consequence has a tower capped with a low-pitch pyramidal roof - or, more pretentiously, with a balustrade - and it is likely to have asymmetrical principle elevation.11

As the style evolved to accommodate less substantial residential types, the deliberate asymmetry and rambling form inspired by the Picturesque massing of wings and towers of buildings such as Osbourne became less central to the mode. So much so that the Italianate terrace forms of the 1880s were not substantially different to their forebears of a generation earlier apart from an appliqué of ‘Italian’ detailing.

Italianate houses in Stonnington

The development of the former Cities of Prahran and 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.

Tuena is distinguished from standard representative Italianate villas in the municipality by its elaborate multi-bay façade with a complex building footprint and return verandah form.

The most obvious local comparator is the impressive towered Victorian villa ‘Blairholme’ at 1034 Malvern Road, for which a Heritage Overlay control has been approved under Amendment C249. Tuena does not have Blairholme’s landmark tower but the façade composition is otherwise very similar. Tuena also compares favourably with ‘Fleete’, an 1881 single-storey Italianate style villa in Armadale (individual Heritage Overlay control HO38). A further comparison, Tuena has a more complex, less conventional plan form than the two Victorian villas with individual heritage overlay controls at 1310 High Street, Malvern (HO545) and 1089 Malvern Road, Toorak (HO273).

![Blairholme, 1034 Malvern Road, Armadale.](image)

![Extract from 1902 MMBW plans for Tuena (left) and Blairholme (right) showing near identical building footprints.](image)
Thematic Context

Tuena, 1026 Malvern Road, Armadale illustrates the following themes, as identified in the Stonnington Thematic Environmental History (Context Pty Ltd, rev. 2009):

- 8.2.1 'Country in the city' - Suburban development in Malvern before WWI
- 8.4.1 Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion

Assessment Against Criteria

Assessment of the place was undertaken in accordance with the HERCON criteria and the processes outlined in the Australian ICOMOS (Burra) Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Significance.

Statement of Significance

Note that the relevant HERCON criteria and themes from the Stonnington Thematic Environmental History (TEH) are shown in brackets.

What is Significant?
Tuena, 1026 Malvern Road, Armadale is a single-storey Italianate style villa built c1887 on allotments forming part of the Brocklesby Estate subdivision.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The original external form, materials and detailing
- Reconstructed verandah elements

Later additions and alterations, including the garage and front fence, are not significant.

How is it significant?
Tuena is of local architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?
Tuena is architecturally significant as fine and largely intact example of a Victorian Italianate style villa with multiple canted bay windows to the front rooms and a return verandah creating an elegant and unusually complex façade composition (Criterion E).
Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme to the extent of the whole property as defined by the title boundary. External paint controls, internal alteration controls and tree controls are not recommended. It is further recommended that the building be graded ‘significant’.

Figure 12  Recommended extent of the Heritage Overlay at 1026 Malvern Road, Armadale.