SETTLING THE LAND
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INTRODUCTION
This chapter examines the displacement of Aboriginal people, migration, links with pastoralism and the central role of land speculation in the study area’s development.

The first Europeans to arrive in the Port Phillip colony came mainly from Britain and Ireland and settled the north bank of the Yarra. Aboriginal people tended to settle on the south bank and this area became associated with Aboriginal camps, missions and stations. In particular, this chapter describes the ‘native village’ supervised by missionaries, which was on an 895 acre site beside the Yarra from 1837.

Migration is a central theme in the study area’s development and this chapter looks at who the immigrants were, where they came from, why, and what they did when they got here. Almost all were seeking a better life and the grand mansions and villas in the area show that many fulfilled their dreams. This includes the man who is, perhaps, the most famous of the study area’s immigrants: Simcha Baevski, a penniless Russian Jew who founded the Myer department store. Also noted is the fact that post-war migrants provided much of the labour for the study area’s, mostly Prahran-based, industry.

Although pastoralism was not itself a key feature of the study area’s developing landscape, pastoralists were central to it as they built their mansions and town houses here with money made in the bush. So too did land speculators and many of Melbourne’s most notorious sub-dividers called the study area home. Their demise in the 1891 financial crash mirrored that of ‘land boomers’ everywhere and is described in the last section of this chapter. So too are government schemes to make home ownership accessible to the working man through closer settlement and war service homes.

This chapter incorporates the following themes:
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV)
Associations with settlements and towns.
Australian Heritage Criteria (AHC)
Peopling Australia – Migrating, Promoting settlement; Building settlements, towns and cities – Planning urban settlements.
HISTORY

3.1 Aboriginal associations with settlements and towns

When European people first occupied Melbourne, they primarily settled on the north banks of the Yarra while the Aboriginal population generally chose to occupy the south side of the river. The south side provided both open grassy woodland and swamps and would have been rich in game and resources (Presland, 1985: 32). The first government policy initiatives in relation to the Aboriginal people of Port Phillip were centred along the south banks of the Yarra River and in the first years of the European settlement of Melbourne this area was associated with Aboriginal missions, stations and camps.

The first government policy objective in relation to Aboriginal people in the newly settled Port Phillip district of the colony of New South Wales was the establishment of an official mission under the supervision of George Langhorne. Governor Richard Bourke hoped to 'civilise' Aboriginal people by creating native villages under the supervision of missionaries. Langhorne had previously acted as Anglican catechist to Aboriginal prisoners on Goat Island in Sydney Harbour and had reservations about the creation of such villages. He felt that Aboriginal people were unlikely to stay in one place and adopt a lifestyle so different from their traditional ways. Ultimately, however, he accepted the commission and upon arriving in Melbourne was asked to work with Captain William Lonsdale to establish a 'native village' (Historical Records of Victoria Vol. 2A, p.153).

As shown on Figure 6, Langhorne and Lonsdale selected a site of about 895 acres on the south side of the Yarra River extending between two surveys that eventually became Punt Road and Williams Road (Barwick 1984:115). The mission encompassed some of the land that is now the Royal Botanic Gardens and met the western edge of John Gardiner's pastoral run. As we shall see, parts of the mission land were later alienated as land was surveyed for sale at the Crown land sales in 1840. Langhorne's mission started in 1837 and managed its residents by 'rewarding' them with food, clothing and land if they were deemed to be cooperative and hardworking. Conversely, these inducements were withdrawn for 'poor behaviour'. In the first few months Langhorne was surprised by the mission's success and was particularly pleased by the fact that parents often left their children at the mission when they left its grounds. This may have been a result of the punitive measures he employed, denying children a meal a day if they left without permission (Historical Records of Victoria Vol. 2A, pp.153-154).

Plans to extend the mission were drawn up in the year it opened and were met with enthusiasm by Governor Bourke. English was being taught to a number of boys and young men who had been persuaded to live there and initially their teacher was 21-year-old John Thomas Smith who later became a prominent publican and Mayor of Melbourne. Smith's successor quickly resigned, however, dispirited by the failure of the young men to participate in a strict program of education. A number of the children were taken away by their parents in the summer of 1837–38 to learn traditional skills. Some of them did not return (Historical Records of Victoria Vol. 2A, pp.205–207).
In mid-1838, Aboriginal residents on the mission came to grief in two incidents. The first involved the theft of potatoes from the land occupied by John Gardiner at the eastern edge of the mission. This incident is one of the few recorded instances of conflict between Aboriginal people and settlers in the present-day study area. Langhorne went to Gardiner’s home after a number of mission residents told him that three people had been shot while stealing potatoes from Gardiner’s field. Gardiner’s men confirmed that a number of men had indeed been fired upon. Two of the men escaped across the river but one, Tullamarine, was knocked down with a musket-butt and captured. Tullamarine and another man involved in the theft, Jin-Jin, were subsequently arrested and committed to trial in Sydney. While in gaol, Jin-Jin and Tullamarine set fire to the prison’s thatched roof, enabling Tullamarine to escape. Tullamarine, his wife and children left Melbourne and Langhorne recounted that two other families who had been resident on the mission intended to join them (Langhorne, G. 1838, Mission Report for April 1838 reproduced in Historical Records of Victoria Vol. 2A, pp.213–14).

In another example of conflict, the involvement of some of the mission’s residents in the theft of sheep and their subsequent arrest led Langhorne into dispute with Lonsdale and caused a number of Aboriginal people to leave the mission. By late 1838, staff losses and funding cuts were resulting in the winding down of mission activities and in 1839 Langhorne resigned. The site itself, however, was to continue to be of importance, with the mission buildings becoming the headquarters of the Aboriginal Protectorate. The story of the Aboriginal Protectorate is told in Chapter 5.1.
### 3.2 Pastoralism

Victoria’s pastoral industry was established in the 1830s and 1840s by people who brought livestock, mainly sheep, across Bass Strait from Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) or overland from the Riverina District of New South Wales, following Major Thomas Mitchell’s successful expedition south of the Murray River to find new pastures. The first pastoralists grazed their animals on vast areas of land illegally, thus acquiring the name squatters. (Over time the term ‘squatter’ became synonymous with wealthy pastoralists.) In 1836 the government formalised their occupation of the land by means of pastoral licences, for which pastoralists paid £10 per year. The pastoral industry was a precarious economic pursuit, and many pastoralists failed, but there was huge wealth to be made, particularly from wool production and stock breeding.

Although the study area was only fleetingly part of the squatters’ domain, it has had a strong connection with Victoria’s pastoral industry, as the place chosen for the city estates of many wealthy squatters.

#### 3.2.1 Pastoral occupation

The first occupation of the study area by a pastoralist occurred when John Gardiner arrived with his cattle in 1836. Gardiner was a member of the first party of overlanders, who brought sheep and cattle overland to the Port Phillip District from the Riverina. For about two years Gardiner occupied a large area around the junction of the Yarra River and the creek that was then known as Kooyong Koot, but now bears his name. This run is believed to have extended to the edge of the Aboriginal mission as shown on Figure 6. Cooper (1935:1–3) believed that Gardiner’s homestead was on the corner of Toorak Road and Elizabeth Street, Kooyong, but later research suggests that it was in Hawthorn. In 1838 Gardiner moved to a better run at Mooroolbark.

Another overlander, David Hill, arrived with his family and livestock in 1839 and briefly held a pastoral licence on land near the study area, but died soon after. His family remained to take up residence in the study area. Hill’s widow, Jane, purchased land in the first crown land sale in the study area held in 1840, and their daughter and son-in-law, Jane and James Glover (another pastoralist) built a villa, Mount Verdant (demolished) in South Yarra (Malone 2002:3–5). As we shall see, the beginning of the Crown land sales in 1840 signalled the end of the brief pastoral age within the study area; however, it was not the end of the strong association between the municipality and the pastoral industry in other parts of Victoria.

#### 3.2.2 A ‘woolly aristocracy’ – squatters and their town houses

Some squatters who prospered in the bush purchased properties in the study area, where they established town residences, convenient to their business and political interests in the city, while they maintained their principal residences at their country homesteads, thus creating the impression of what Dingle (1984:82) describes as a ‘woolly aristocracy’. The Armytages of Como were the most prominent in this category (the story of Como is told in detail in Chapter 6.1). Others, having made their fortunes, employed managers on their pastoral runs or retired from pastoral activities altogether, to take up permanent residence in the best parts of the study area. At first their houses were relatively modest, but as Victoria’s prosperity increased, so did the inclination to identify with such prosperity by building mansions and enjoying extravagant lifestyles. Alexander Landale of Aroona (demolished) presented an interesting self-portrait of a squatter living in Toorak:

… the ‘squatter’ as we know him now, is an educated gentleman who maintains an establishment in town and spends his money freely on those thousand-and-one luxuries which cause the circulation of money and benefit the classes who supply the luxuries which they are not wealthy enough to enjoy (Victoria’s Representative Men at Home, cited in Malone, 2002:7).
xxiii Aroona, c.1890.
[SLHC Reg. No. 2407.1]
John Goodman, a squatter who had pastoral interests in central Victoria, lived at Miegunyah, a ten-acre property in Orrong Road in the 1850s. His modest six-roomed house was enlarged by a later owner. Goodman was a member of the Legislative Council and the Prahran Council, and briefly served as Commissioner for Customs (Cooper, 1924:76–77, Malone 202:32–33). Another squatter with interests in the city was Archibald Fiskin, who in 1879 built a mansion on the corner of Kooyong and Malvern roads. The house was later purchased by another pastoralist, Colin Simson, who renamed it Carmyle (Foster, 1999:54–5). Simson’s brother, John, bought a 20-roomed mansion in Toorak – Trawalla, built in 1867 for a Melbourne merchant – and enlarged it by 30 rooms (Malone, 2002:24).
3.3 Land speculation

The close proximity to the village of Melbourne and the favourable topography of the high ground overlooking the Yarra quickly established it as a desirable place for settlement. As we shall see, the first land sales in the 1840s quickly established a cycle of speculation and subdivision that was to culminate in the feverish atmosphere of the 1880s land boom when land was taken up, subdivided and re-sold (often many times over) by entrepreneurial settlers and speculators, many of whom were migrants, as Melbourne boomed in the wake of the riches brought by the gold rush. It was during the early land sales in the 1840s that a pattern of ownership emerged with wealthy and influential people acquiring more favourable sites on the high ground, while the lower swampy areas of Prahran and Windsor were set aside for the farming industry and working-class houses.

Speculation in land led to fortunes being made and lost in the study area, from lands both within and outside the area. Within the study area there were early indications that its land would be highly valued, but demand rose and fell with each boom and recession, as did the fortunes of speculators. Although speculation is a common theme running through the history of buying land in Victoria, it is of particular significance in the study area’s history. It was here that a number of the most notorious ‘land boomers’ built their own boom-style mansions, only to lose them in the financial collapse.

As we shall see, this cycle of land speculation and subdivision reached its frenzied zenith in the 1880s before coming to a spectacular end with the financial crash that resulted in the 1890s’ depression. This halted further development for many years, until it was revived again in the early twentieth century and ushered in a new, and somewhat less frenetic, period of land sales and subdivision. Nevertheless the trend was upwards, as metropolitan Melbourne expanded, particularly in the preferred undulating country to its east.

By the end of the 1930s the subdivision of the study area for suburban allotments was almost complete. While many years of subdivision and new development would build upon these early divisions, the die was largely cast and the almost continuous cycle of speculation and sales is revealed in the patterns of subdivision in many parts of study area today.

3.3.1 Crown land sales 1840–1850

Sales of Crown land in and around Melbourne commenced in 1837. Robert Hoddle, the Government Surveyor, subdivided the land according to a grid plan, paying no attention to the natural topography. The first sale of land within the study area took place on 10 June 1840, when 22 allotments in the western part of the Parish of Prahran (comprising the northern section of the former Prahran municipality and the north-west corner of the Malvern municipality) were offered. As shown in Figure 7, the agricultural allotments, ranging in area from 19 acres to 65 acres, were north of Gardiners Creek Road (now Toorak Road) sloping down to the Yarra River and Gardiners Creek. The elongated blocks were designed to give each allotment access to water. The sale attracted considerable interest and most allotments were bought by speculators looking for future profits as Melbourne expanded. Few of the initial purchasers actually settled the district. (Cooper, 1924:14; Malone, 1998:1)
One original grantee who did remain to settle on his allotment was Lieutenant Charles Forrest, who bought allotment 6. In 1841 Forrest built *Waterloo Cottage* on the high ground overlooking the Yarra River at the northern end of Chapel Street. This house, believed to be the first erected in the City of Prahran, was still standing in 1923 (Cooper, 1924:14–16), close to the site of Melbourne High School, but has since been demolished. Another grantee was Peter Ferrie who purchased allotment 21, which he named ‘Glen Ferrie’. Ferrie is thought to have constructed a house by 1841.

Most original Crown grantees subdivided their allotments for resale, with the better parts purchased fairly quickly by merchants, pastoralists, professional men, government officials and former army officers like Forrest, who established estates in the best locations. Some purchasers, including Chief Protector of Aborigines George Augustus Robinson, built more than one house, to become landlords. Robinson’s own house, on part of allotment 8, was called *Tivoli*. Sales of the low-lying ground was slower, and generally resulted in areas of poor quality housing for rent, such as ‘Daly Town’ near the northern end of Chapel Street (Malone, 1998:19). East of Kooyong Road, allotments 19 and 20 remained in the hands of speculators until the mid 1850s (Foster, 1999, ch.2).

When the study area’s second and third land sales took place in June 1849 and May 1850 (refer to Figure 8) the process of speculation and subdivision for resale was repeated, with the best land on the high ground selling as estates for the wealthy, and the slower resale of the poorly drained low areas. Purchasers included local residents G.A. Robinson, Dr E.C. Hobson and R.A. Balbirnie, who were obviously aware of the potential of the land. In the early 1850s Balbirnie sold most of his allotment 33 to the Cassell family, who established the Hawksburn estate (Malone, 2000:34 and 36). Balbirnie also bought allotment 24, east of Glenferrie Road, which he divided into seven allotments (Foster and Stefanopoulos, 2001:11).

The purchaser of the whole block bounded by Punt Road, Toorak Road, Chapel Street and Commercial Road was Peter Davis, an estate agent, who immediately subdivided the land for resale as small farms, although only the well drained parts were sold before the 1860s (Cooper, 1924:11, 12 and 32; Malone, 1998:23–26, 2000:34).

At Windsor on the south-west corner of the study area, the blocks were smaller and brought the highest price per acre, presumably because of their proximity to the already developing suburb of St. Kilda, from which settlement was expected to flow. This corner was soon subdivided for working-class housing and small shops (Cooper, 1924:13–14; Malone, 1999:26–29).
It is interesting to note how the subsequent subdivision of land in the study area created a street pattern that strongly reflected the shape and orientation of these original allotments. Hence, we see that the earliest streets to the north of Gardiners Creek (Toorak) Road ran north-south, while the streets in the south-west pocket of Windsor ran mostly east-west. This can be seen in a map reproduced in Malone showing Prahran in 1856. While later subdivision and changes have blurred some of these distinctions this pattern remains largely evident today.

One speculator who did make a huge profit was John Sullivan, Colonial Surgeon to the Port Phillip District. Sullivan purchased Allotment 25, the most remote of the allotments on offer at the 1849 sale, for £151 and sold it in 1853 for £10,972. The new owner, barrister (later County Court Judge) Charles B.C. Skinner, planned an estate in the style of an English village, and named it Ledbury after a town in the English Malvern Hills. To attract land buyers Skinner built the Malvern Hill Hotel on the corner of Glenferrie and Malvern roads. Skinner’s Malvern Hill Estate along with this hotel, was to give the suburb of Malvern its name. The estate failed to attract wealthy buyers looking for suburban villa sites, and was initially settled by a few workers, market gardeners and brickmakers. Eventually the small allotments were consolidated into larger blocks that attracted wealthy purchasers (Foster, 1999:28–32).

3.3.2 Crown land sales 1854–1879

Apart from the nine blocks in the north included in the 1840 and 1849 sales, Crown land sales in what became Malvern municipality did not commence until February 1854, when the first twenty allotments to the south of Malvern Road and east of Boundary (Kooyong) Road were sold as shown in Figure 9. Further sales soon followed and by the end of the 1850s most of Malvern’s land had been sold. By 1879 almost all the land in the study area had been alienated from the Crown (McLaren, 1987). The allotments were smaller than those to the west, with the largest of them situated along Gardiners Creek.

One of the few original Crown grantees to settle on his estate was Michael Keeley, who in 1857 built his mansion (later called Brynmawr) on nine acres in Charleville (Burke) Road (Raworth and Foster, 1997:3–4). Located so far out of town, with no good roads or transport systems, the land beyond Kooyong Road attracted little urban development before the 1880s, apart from a small concentration of houses and shops around Skinner’s village and the Balbirnie subdivision at the Glenferrie and Malvern roads intersection. A small cottage from this time survives today at 1225 Malvern Road (Malvern Heritage Study). Further out, the country east of Tooronga Road remained sparsely settled until the twentieth century (Bower, 1995).

Although development spread generally from west to east, there was some early settlement in the south-east along Dandenong Road, especially after two railway lines to Oakleigh opened in 1879 and 1890. There was a subdivision made west of Chadstone Road in 1901, but little housing before 1911 (Bower, 1995). While awaiting suburban development, much of the land in the east of the study area was leased or sold for productive pursuits, mostly brickmaking or fruit and vegetable growing. These industries were gradually displaced by urban development in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

3.3.3 Speculation and land boomers - Subdivision from 1880 onwards

During the 1880s Melbourne experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity, growth and development. The urban boundaries were pushed out as people, sharing in the general prosperity and the new ideal of home ownership, sought new residential lands. An illustration of this growth is the doubling of the population of Prahran municipality in the decade between 1881 and 1891 from 20,000 to almost 40,000 (Tibbets, 1983:34).
The study area had many acres of vacant land, held, as we have seen, by speculators waiting for the right time to sell. Malvern in particular experienced a burst of suburban development as land developers busily subdivided and auctioned choice building sites on housing estates, and builders rapidly covered them with houses. Most of the residential streets running into Glenferrie Road and High Street were created at that time, along with the main-street commercial development (Raworth and Foster, 1997:7).

At Armadale the sale of George Taylor’s *Auburn Vale Estate* in 1887 resulted in new residential development (Malone, 2005:22).

Land companies were floated to buy land for quick resale at large profits, offering large dividends to unwary investors. As land prices spiralled, banks and building societies over-reached their lending capacities, and borrowers borrowed beyond their capacity to repay. Eventually in December 1891 the whole structure began to collapse. People lost their savings, building stopped and new estates remained vacant. In Malvern, *Coldblo Estate* was released in June 1892, too late to catch the boom, and remained unsold, as did the Gascoigne Estate. The collapse resulted in a disastrous depression that brought unemployment and misery to many thousands, and halted further development in the study area – and everywhere else in Victoria – until the end of the nineteenth century.

Land dealer and financier Sir Matthew Davies built his mansion, *The Towers*, in Toorak. When his empire crashed, his household contents were auctioned, but there was no buyer for the house. *The Towers* stood empty for many years. The property was reduced by a subdivision, which formed Towers Road in 1911. The house was demolished in 1927 and the remaining property subdivided (Cannon, 1972:311–14). *Valenties* was built in Glen Iris just before the crash by Matthew’s brother John Mark Davies, who was a lawyer, land developer and Attorney General. The mansion survived its owner’s financial ruin, and is now part of Caulfield Grammar School in Willowy Avenue (Cannon, 1972:311–14).

One of the most notorious land boomers was James Munro, who, according to Cooper, was a grocer in Prahran shortly after his arrival from Scotland in 1858. Munro’s career as a financier and land dealer commenced when he started the Victorian Permanent Building Society in 1865. He entered Parliament as Member for North Melbourne in 1874, and in 1876 built *Armadale* (117 Kooyong Road) on a large estate. The house is modest compared with the later boom-time mansions such as *Valenties*. Munro became Premier of Victoria in 1890, and was responsible, with Attorney General John Mark Davies for the *Voluntary Liquidation Act* 1891, which in effect took away the rights of minority depositors in banks and building societies. When his business empire collapsed in 1892, Munro left the country to become Agent-General in London. *Armadale* was sold and continued as a private home until its purchase by the Melbourne Bible Institute in 1944. It later became part of the King David School (Cooper, 1924:97; Cannon, 1972:242–48; Malone, 2005:8–9).

**3.4 Government assistance**

During the depression that followed the crash of the 1890s the Victorian government attempted to settle more people on the land by acquiring large estates and breaking them up into small farms for sale to people of limited means. *The Closer Settlement Act* 1904 provided for compulsory acquisition of freehold land. The intention of Closer Settlement was to sell, at prices that covered the government’s costs of purchase and subdivision, to genuine settlers, thus cutting out speculators. Occupation was by 31½ year lease, with a £50 deposit, and a requirement to reside on the property. A Crown Grant could be issued after 12 years upon full payment of the balance of purchase money. By 1917 about 4500 settlers were occupying farms throughout Victoria. In addition, 1046 small workmen’s allotments were made available, mainly around Melbourne (*Victorian Year Book*, 1973:10–11; Bower, 2001).

**Prahran Mayor George W. Taylor of Wynnstay (demolished) and Charles H. James of Illawarra were also local land boomers caught by the crash.**

**3.4.1 Closer settlement**

Update 1

Inserted new sections 3.3.4 and 3.3.5, plus additional words
In 1911 the Land Purchase and Management Board (later known as the Closer Settlement Board) purchased the Belmont Estate in Glen Iris. The property was subdivided into about 200 quarter-acre allotments, named ‘Tooronga Estate’ and promoted as a future ‘model portion’ of the new City of Malvern. Tooronga Estate’s main selling point was its proximity to rail and tram routes. Those who purchased the blocks were generally clerks, salesmen, tradesmen, tramway and railway workers, who earned around £3 to £4 per week. A few years earlier Justice H.B. Higgins (a Toorak resident) had determined an amount slightly above £2 as the minimum wage upon which an unskilled worker could support his family. The majority of the Tooronga settlers moved from rented accommodation in the inner suburbs, though some were from Prahran and other parts of Malvern. Having saved up a deposit, they grabbed the opportunity to fulfil the Australian dream of a home of their own in a pleasant eastern suburb. They built modest four to six roomed houses, mostly weatherboard. A considerable number of the original lessees did succeed in paying off their land and remained as long-term Tooronga residents (Bower, 2001). Few of these houses remain today.
3.4.2 War service homes

After World War I the government again stepped in to assist people to buy land – this time to settle returned soldiers and their families in affordable houses. In 1920 the War Service Homes Commission compulsorily acquired land between Serrell Street and Belgrave Road and developed the Carnegie Estate, with a capacity for 500 houses. The original plan was to provide generous recreational space on ‘garden suburb’ principles, but although the returned soldiers built their houses, the only part of the garden suburb plan to eventuate was a pair of grassy areas called Villers Square and Brettoneaux Square (Strahan, 1989:71–73).

Also in 1920, sixteen houses were constructed in Victory Square, Armadale (off Ashleigh Street) for war widows. The houses, which cost £500 each, were funded by popular subscription.

3.5 Migrating to seek opportunity

The settlement of the study area is closely linked with immigration, which is a key theme throughout the study area’s history, as waves of immigrants from overseas arrived in the study area seeking a better way of life. The early immigrants were almost entirely from Britain and Ireland, although there were some notable exceptions. Later the study area became host of many post World War II immigrants from continental Europe and later still from other parts of the world, generally reflecting the waves of immigration to Australia.

3.5.1 Fortune seekers – nineteenth century immigration

The fulfilment of opportunities for many pastoralists, land speculators and gold seekers is displayed in the study area’s mansions and villas. As Cooper pointed out, ‘These early men turned their hands to almost anything that promised to return money’ (1924:35–36). One such fortune seeker was R.A. Balbirnie, descendant of a noble Scottish family, who operated a punt across the Yarra River at the site of Princes Bridge. He made a fortune in land and lived for many years at Balmerino in South Yarra before returning to Britain. The study area attracted many professionally trained men (women then being denied access to the professions), particularly in the legal profession, who were ready to step into leading positions as the colony’s administrative systems were established. Edward Eyre Williams, Como’s first owner, arrived in Australia as a young barrister in 1842, to become a judge in the Supreme Court ten years later (Fox, 1996).
On the other hand immigrants with more humble trade origins are exemplified by the Woodmason family of market gardeners who arrived from England in the 1840s, worked hard to build local enterprises, and took a prominent role in municipal affairs in Malvern.

Cooper relates an amusing but very telling anecdote about Major-General Edward Macarthur, who was Acting Governor of the colony in 1856. Macarthur happened to be chatting with Sergeant Dowling, an Irish immigrant, and suggested that the Sergeant was ‘better off in Prahran than if he had remained in Ireland’. Dowling replied ‘Faith, and had your Excellency remained in Scotland, it would indade (sic) have been a long time before you would have become a governor’. For the record, Macarthur was actually born in Bath, England (Cooper, 1924:111).

The gold rush of the 1850s brought the first groups of Chinese settlers to Melbourne. A well-known Chinese immigrant living in nineteenth century Malvern was Kong Meng Lowe, a wealthy merchant and leader in Melbourne’s Chinese community. Kong Meng, his English wife and their family were well-known in the community. They lived at Longwood (demolished) where they had a tobacco plantation employing Chinese workers (Cooper 1935:124–26). A number of Chinese men, having tried their luck on the goldfields, established laundries in the area. Malone notes a couple of Chinese laundries in Prahran (1984:16–17) Win Vears remembers one in High Street, Armadale, in the 1930s:

There was a little shop that was a Chinese laundry, and you could see the little, tiniest man with his pigtail (Vears, interview, 5 July 2000).
3.5.2 Creating a cosmopolitan society – twentieth century immigration

Before World War II, immigrants settling in the study area were predominantly Anglo-Celtic (as in most parts of Victoria), but there were some exceptional examples of immigrants of non-English speaking background who, having prospered in business, settled in prestigious parts of the municipality.

Perhaps the most famous ‘rags to riches’ resident was Simcha Baevski, the Russian Jew who arrived penniless in Australia in 1899, and as Sidney Myer founded the huge retailing empire. In 1920, having made his fortune, Myer settled with his wife Merlyn at Cranlana in Toorak (www.myerfoundation.org.au).

Jupp (1988:644–45) notes that there were some Jews from Eastern Europe living in Prahran from the 1920s, close to the larger communities in neighbouring St. Kilda and Caulfield, and to the synagogue built in 1929 in South Yarra, just outside the study area’s border. The Jews were strongly identified with the clothing industry, an industry that was an important part of Prahran’s economy (see chapter 5). The Nathan family of furniture manufacturers established the well-known Maples store in Chapel Street in 1906 (Malone, 1983:26).

An early Greek immigrant to settle in the study area was successful hotelier and businessman Anthony Lucas, who bought the Toorak mansion Whernside in 1918. Lucas established the Australia Hotel in Melbourne and was a leader of Melbourne’s Greek community. Whernside later became the home of Jewish immigrant and business tycoon, Solomon Lew (Strahan, 1989:58–59; Jupp, 1988:647). Almost every town in Australia had a Greek café, and this tradition was carried on in Prahran with a number of restaurants and cafés in Chapel Street run by Greek or Greek Cypriot families (Jupp, 1988:510; Malone, 1984:25).

Prahran’s cosmopolitan character really developed in the 1950s and 60s, as immigrants arrived from all parts of Europe. They occupied the old working-class houses and newly built Housing Commission flats in the suburbs of Prahran and Windsor abandoned by Australian-born residents moving out to new suburbs. Post-war immigrants provided much of the workforce for the study area’s thriving industrial sector, then based in Prahran. One of the largest European groups was the Greeks. Their strong presence in the study area is evidenced by the St Demetrius Greek Orthodox Church, which was converted from the former Mt Erica Methodist Church, and the Greek community centre in High Street (Malone, 2001:39).

By the 1980s many Greeks had moved out to Malvern. This pattern of migration is demonstrated by St Catherine’s Greek Orthodox Church in Epping Street, Malvern East, which has a large congregation, and a Greek Senior Citizens Club meets at the Malvern Town Hall.

Since the 1970s the European immigrants have been joined by people from Turkey, the Middle East, Asia and South America – many of them once again escaping the effects of war and oppression. Many of these immigrants were initially housed at the Housing Commission estates in Prahran. One significant group in Prahran is the Khmer, most of whom came as refugees from Cambodia. The Khmer Language Cultural Centre was established in Prahran in 1980s (Wilde, 1993:230; Jupp, 1988:657–58). From the 1970s a strong Indian community has formed in Prahran and Malvern (Wilde, 1993:70–73; Jupp, 1988:546).
STONNINGTON THEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

Settling the Land

Figure 9 - Land sales 1854-1880

City of Stonnington boundary
Crown land allotment
HERITAGE

The theme of *Settling the Land* is illustrated by a variety of places that have important heritage values. These values are sometimes expressed in tangible ways, such as by surviving fabric (for instance, buildings, structures, trees and landscapes), but are also apparent in the associations and meanings embodied by the place for different communities. This chapter provides a summary of values associated with these places and provides a representative list. For further examples, reference should be made to the heritage studies and reports listed in the bibliography.

Pastoralism

The study area is important within the metropolitan area for its associations with many of the important early pastoralists who played an important role in the development of Victoria. While many of the mansions and houses associated with pastoralists have been demolished, those that survive include Carmyle, Como, and Trawalla, which provide important evidence of the wealth of the pastoralists and their position of influence in society.

This era is also commemorated by street names associated with early pastoralists or their estates – for example, Tivoli Road, Daly Street.

Land speculation

The places associated with the theme of *Land speculation* provide important evidence of the pattern of settlement in Melbourne. The study area is of interest because it vividly illustrates how the topography influenced and reflected the social divisions within nineteenth century society. This is illustrated by the distinct contrast between the pattern of development between the closely subdivided working class areas on low lying land, and the spacious ‘garden suburbs’ of the wealthy on higher ground that will be explored further in the *Building Suburbs* chapter.

Crown land sales

The early land sales quickly established the importance of the ‘high ground’ along the south banks of the Yarra as the favoured residential domain of many of the most wealthy and influential people in early Melbourne society. This land was the first to be sold and was strategically located close to the city and on the important trade routes to the emerging rural districts in the south and east.

Places associated with this theme, which generally date from before 1860 are very rare. Known examples include:

- Malvern Hill Hotel
- Houses and buildings associated with early Crown Allotment estates such as Avoca (8 Gordon Grove, South Yarra), Brynmawr (now part of Sacre Coeur Catholic Girls School, 172 Burke Road, Glen Iris), and Viewbank, 9 Viewbank Road, Glen Iris
- Houses associated with early Crown allotment subdivisions include a group in and around Avoca and Caroline streets, South Yarra, including Richmond House (56 Avoca Street), 64 Avoca Street, Caroline House (74 Caroline Street), 75 and 76 Caroline Street, as well as the houses at 18 Douglas Street, Toorak, and 5 George Street, Prahran

The study area illustrates how far Melbourne expanded in the nineteenth century during the development boom fuelled by the gold rush, before the interruption caused by the 1890s’ depression. This is illustrated by subdivisions such as the Gascoigne Estate in Malvern East which was not fully developed until the twentieth century, as well as Victorian era houses scattered throughout Malvern east of Glenferrie Road such as in Stanhope Street.
Speculation and land boomers

The study area is notable for the strong associations with many of the most notorious nineteenth century land-boomers and property speculators who had significant influence upon the settlement of the study area and Victoria generally. The wealth and status of these people at the height of the property boom was demonstrated by the often extravagant design of the house and its grounds, while the depression that followed was often poignantly reflected in the later subdivision that reduced their grounds, by the conversion of many to institutional uses or the eventual demolition of others. The surviving land-boomer mansions and the surrounding development in the study area therefore provide important evidence of this notorious chapter in Victoria’s history. Examples include:

- Armadale (now part of King David School)
- Valentines (now part of Caulfield Grammar School)
- Illawarra (now on a much reduced allotment in Illawarra Court).

Government assistance

This theme provides evidence of how State and Federal Governments at various times have entered the property market to assist people with purchasing land to build a home. Examples include the Carnegie Estate War Service Homes, in and around Villers Square and Bretoneaux Square.

Migrating to seek opportunity

Immigration has been a strong and continuing influence upon the development of Victorian society, and the study area is particularly notable as a place where a variety of immigrant groups came to live, particularly in the post-World War II era. Foremost among these was Melbourne’s Greek community who established a considerable presence in the study area. Examples of heritage places associated with the theme of Immigrating include:

- St Demetrius Greek Orthodox Church, High Street, Prahran
- St Catherine’s Greek Orthodox Church, Malvern East
- Prahran Migrant Resource Centre – originally housed at the former Salvation Army Citadel, and now at the Grattan Gardens Community Centre.

Archaeological places

The parts of the study area west of Williams Road were among the earliest parts of Melbourne outside the CBD to be settled. Although many of the earliest buildings and neighbourhoods have been demolished or redeveloped, it is possible that archaeological evidence may remain that could provide valuable evidence of the early settlement of Melbourne. Places that have archaeological potential, which have been identified by this study include:

- The car park behind Chapel Street, to the south of shops facing Commercial Road
- The Housing Commission estates in Malvern Road
- The vacant land on the east side of Chapel Street to the north of the Como Centre, and the semi-industrial land on the west side of Chapel Street, north of Toorak Road.