

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**Rosehill Chapel, 19 Mayfield Avenue, Malvern (HO276)**



*Figure 1.19 Mayfield Avenue (GJM Heritage, July 2020).*

DATE: June 2021

<b>Place type:</b> Chapel, house	<b>Architect:</b> Unknown
<b>Construction Date:</b> 1856	<b>Builder:</b> Unknown

### Historical Context Summary

The City of Stonnington stands on the Traditional Lands of the Woi wurrung and Boon Wurrung Peoples of the East Kulin Nations. Archaeologists believe that Aboriginal People have been in Victoria for more than 30,000 years. Throughout this long history their relationship with the landscape (where and how they live) has changed according to factors such as climate change, resource availability, and cultural change (Context 2006:10).

The first European settler in the Malvern district was John Gardiner in 1835, a pastoralist from New South Wales who was one of the first overlanders to Port Phillip. He pastured his stock near the junction of Gardiner's Creek and the Yarra River and is the namesake of Gardiner's Creek, Gardiner's Creek Road (now Toorak Road) and both the locality and the Shire of Gardiner (before they were re-named Malvern). The first recorded use of the name Malvern was in January 1854, when barrister Charles B. G. Skinner named his hotel on the corner of Malvern and Glenferrie roads the 'Malvern Hill' after a district in England. The name for the Shire of Malvern was derived from Malvern Hill Estate, a private subdivision in the area dating to 1856 (City of Stonnington [CoS]; Context 2006:34).

The first land sales in the area were held in 1854 and most original Crown grantees subdivided their allotments for resale (Context 2006:41; 2009:4). Gardiner's Road District was proclaimed in 1856 before Gardiner Shire was formed in 1871, which was renamed Malvern Shire in 1878 (CoS). The municipal boundary comprised the current localities of Malvern (previously Gardiner), Malvern East, Glen Iris (south of Gardiners Creek), Kooyong, Armadale (east of Kooyong Road), Toorak (east of Kooyong Road) and Chadstone (west of Warrigal Road). Early directories listed Malvern and Malvern East as the one locality, until 1910.

The former Malvern Shire saw slow population growth to 1881, by which time it totalled just under 2,000 people (Victorian Places). In 1879, the Oakleigh Railway Line was opened along the southern extent of the municipality, through Malvern, Armadale, Toorak and Hawksburn to join the existing line at South Yarra. The arrival of the Oakleigh railway coincided with the start of the land boom, which resulted in considerable urban growth. In the 1880s the district comprised substantial residences on large allotments, as well as pastoral and agricultural holdings (including market gardens and orchards) and commercial development (Context 2006:41, 65-6). During the 1880s boom period, the municipality saw a dramatic increase in population, quadrupling to approximately 8,000 by 1891, and steadily increasing to 10,000 by 1901 (Victorian Places). In the 1890s a number of timber houses were built in Malvern as an economy measure, but some residents complained that wooden houses would degenerate into slums. Concern about this development led to a slum abolition movement and subsequently, c1912, Malvern Council began to declare brick areas, where timber houses were not permitted. By 1916 the Council had also fixed a minimum area for individual housing allotments at 6000 square feet, with minimum frontages of fifty feet (Context 2006:128).

The railway line along the northern extent of the municipality was established in 1890 through the Glen Iris Valley from Burnley. Stations were established at Heyington, Kooyong, Tooronga, Gardiner, Glen Iris and Darling, however, expected residential development in their vicinity stalled during the 1890s following the economic collapse (Context 2006:66). The 1893 *Australian Handbook* (as cited in Victorian Places) described Malvern as 'an elevated residential suburb', served by a line of omnibuses from Prahran, with many leading merchants and professional men living in the area in pleasantly situated 'dwellings of a superior class'. The entry noted that a number of notable mansions had been erected by this date, and that the market gardens and orchards were 'steadily being reduced, and cut up into building allotments, on which [were] being erected

many handsome villas and business establishments' (Victorian Places). The municipality saw rapid development and urbanisation from 1900 and it was declared a Borough and then a Town in 1901. In 1911 the municipality was declared a City, with a residential population of 16,000 (Context 2006:86; Victorian Places).

The Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust was established in 1908, with electric tramlines opening along High Street in 1910-14, Glenferrie Road in 1910-13, to the south along Wattletree Road in 1910-12, and Malvern Road in 1915. The arrival of the tramlines further drove the development of commercial centres in the immediate vicinity and residential development beyond. New train stations were built at Armadale, Hawksburn, Malvern and Toorak between 1908 and 1918, and at Malvern East in 1929 (Context 2006:70-2, 113; Victorian Places).

Residential development during the early twentieth century generally occurred on newly subdivided estates or on nineteenth century subdivisions that had remained partly or wholly undeveloped during the 1890s depression (Context 2009:5). In 1912 it was reported that 800 houses a year were being built in the (by then) City of Malvern, which boasted 'a progress unprecedented by any other suburb' (Context 2009:128). In the decade between 1911 and 1921 the population in the City of Malvern doubled, from 16,000 to 32,000 residents, and then increased steadily to 43,000 by 1933 (Victorian Places). This population growth saw development spread to the Glen Iris Valley and the outer reaches of the City, in Malvern East. The housing stock in this eastern part of the municipality was more characteristically uniform and unadorned in comparison to housing in Malvern. Kooyong's development was substantially completed by the end of the 1920s (Context 2006:128, 131).

By 1946 the Australian Blue Book (as cited in Victorian Places) stated that Malvern was one of the 'leading residential suburbs of the Metropolis'. It comprised the substantial homes of many of Melbourne's leading citizens, in what was termed 'The Garden City' due to the number of parks and public gardens. Development in the City of Malvern steadied from the 1930s, with the population averaging 45,000 until the 1990s (Victorian Places). The City of Malvern amalgamated with the City of Prahran in 1994, to form the City of Stonnington.

### **Place History Summary**

In 1856 William Philpott purchased 20 acres (8 ha) of land at the south east corner of Toorak and Glenferrie Roads (part of Crown Allotment 24, Township of Gardiner, Parish of Prahran). In the same year a brick house named Rosehill (since demolished) was under construction, and in 1857 Philpott was described as the owner and occupier of a 9-roomed brick house with outhouses and a 2-roomed gardener's house (Malvern Rate Book, assess nos. 108, 1856; 124, 1857-58).

William and Rosetta Philpott lived at Rosehill until the family returned to England in 1872 (*Argus*, 7 Feb 1872:2). The property had been unsuccessfully offered for sale by auction in 1869 (*Argus*, 4 Mar 1869:2) when it was described as a 20-acre (8 ha) estate with vines, fruit, vegetable and flower gardens, shrubbery and lawn trees. The two-storey house was of brick with slate roof with a large range of outbuildings including what was described in the auction notice: 'apart stands a most substantial bluestone building, with slate roof, which may be appropriately termed a private chapel, with ecclesiastically finished ceiling; there are two dormitories.' At this time Philpott also advertised for sale two organs, which may have been housed in the bluestone chapel.

Rosehill was sold to draper Thomas Alston (Malvern Rate Book, assess no. 342, 1877) in 1877 and sold again in 1880 to Thomas Cutting (Malvern Rate Book, assess no 275, 1880). In 1888 Rosehill was purchased by solicitor Walter Henry Lewis (later Mayor of Malvern) who subdivided the property into over 100 allotments and created the Great Toorak Estate with two main east-west streets: Mayfield and Chesterville Avenues ('The Great Toorak Estate' subdivision plan). The house at Rosehill was demolished at this time (Butler 2002: 350), however the bluestone building was retained on an allotment on the east side of the newly formed Mayfield

Avenue. By 1891 this allotment was owned by a syndicate which included architect Lloyd Tayler, and the bluestone building, described variously as a two or three-roomed stone house, was occupied by accountant Henry Sharp (Malvern Rate Book, assess no 165, 1891). A footprint of the building in 1902 is shown at Figure 4.

Gifted horseman and amateur jockey Alexander Creswick acquired the Mayfield Avenue allotment and bluestone building in 1908, adding it to his Yarrien Estate which was located directly to the south. Under his ownership it was used for accommodation for his trainer (various Malvern Rate Books incl 1917 assess no 210).

Teachers Isobel and Robina Hamilton purchased a number of buildings in Mayfield Avenue in 1919 and the established Toorak College operated from the subject site until 1926 (Malvern Rate Book 1918 assess nos. 240-246, 1918; Toorak College). As part of the school, the bluestone building was used as a chapel and assembly hall. The property continued as St Margaret's Presbyterian school until 1940.

In the 1930s the Mayfield Avenue buildings, including the subject site, became known as the Mayfield Centre. The Mayfield Centre served as a training depot for the Women's Australian Auxiliary Air Force in the early 1940s, and the Wesley College junior school from 1942 to 1945 (Butler 2002: 351). In 1949 the bluestone building, as part of the Mayfield Centre, was purchased by the Australian Red Cross and continued to be used for health-related purposes until 1995 when the entire property was sold and redeveloped (Butler 2002: 352). The bluestone building was the only structure retained in this redevelopment (Butler 2002: 352).

The building has been incorporated into a residential development by architect Robert Mills and was last sold in 2010 ([www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au)).

### **Description Summary**

Rosehill Chapel, 19 Mayfield Avenue, is situated at the front boundary of a large residential development on the south side of Mayfield Avenue. The building is a modest, random coursed bluestone rubble building with decorative timber valence to the east gable end and a gabled slate roof. The openings in the north elevation consist of three narrow double-hung windows and a door with top light. All openings feature stone lintels with the windows comprising stone sills and glazing bars to the window margins. The eastern elevation includes a door with stone lintel, and the western elevation comprises two narrow windows with the same detail as those facing north, as well as two smaller attic windows.

A two-storey wing has been added to the rear of the subject place.

Key Features:

- Early Victorian building
- Random coursed bluestone rubble walls
- Slate-clad gabled roof
- Decorative timber valence to east gable end
- Narrow rectangular window openings to north and west elevations with bluestone lintels and sills and fine glazing bars to window margins
- Narrow door openings with bluestone lintels, to north and east elevations
- Pair of attic windows to west elevation.

### **Intactness/Integrity**

The Rosehill Chapel remains highly intact to its early Victorian period of construction. A parallel gabled-roof wing has been added sensitively to the rear, connected to the bluestone building at the east end by a hipped-roof section. Overall the building retains a high degree of integrity.

### **References**

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J B Cooper, *The History of Malvern, From its First Settlement to a City*, Melbourne, 1935.

G Butler & Associates, *Heritage Overlay Review*, 2002.

Jackson, A., *William Philpott: pioneer Victorian first class cricketer*, 2011 (SHC60104)

Landata Victoria, historical aerial photograph, 1945.

Malvern Rate Books, dates as cited.

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, Malvern & Hawthorn Plan No 58, 1902 & 1947 (SLV).

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*The Argus*.

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## Historic Images and Plans

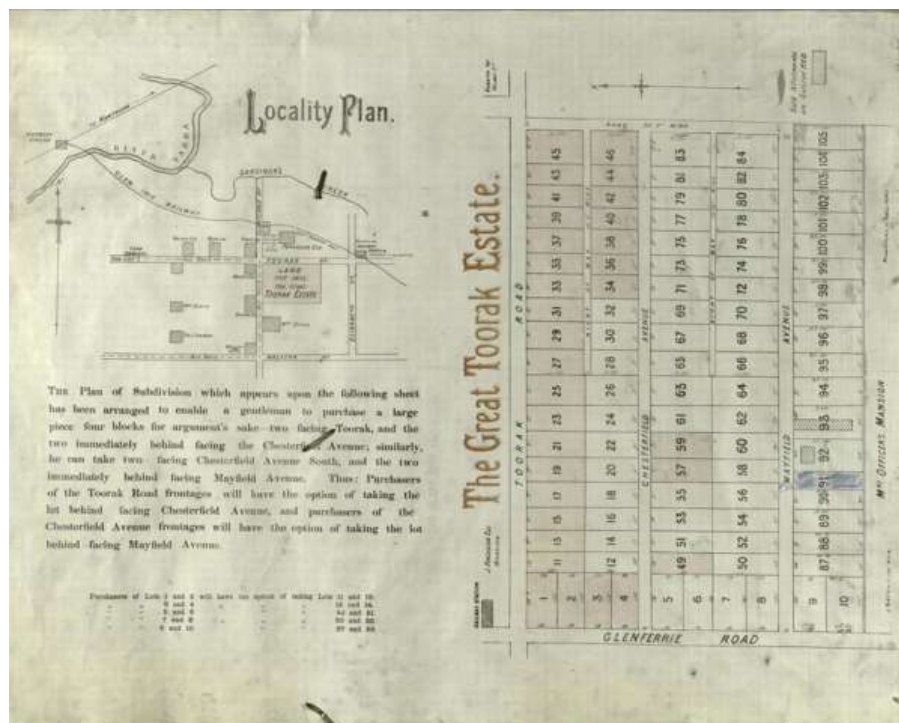


Figure 2. The Great Toorak Estate, undated (Source: SLV)

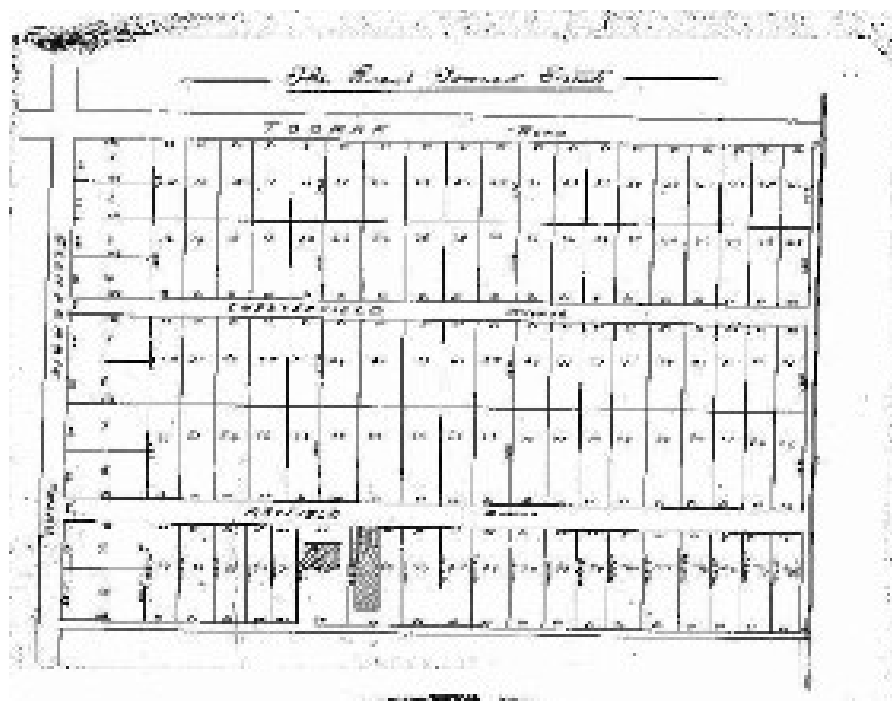


Figure 3. Great Toorak Estate, plan dated 1888. (Source: SHC Malvern Collections MH382)



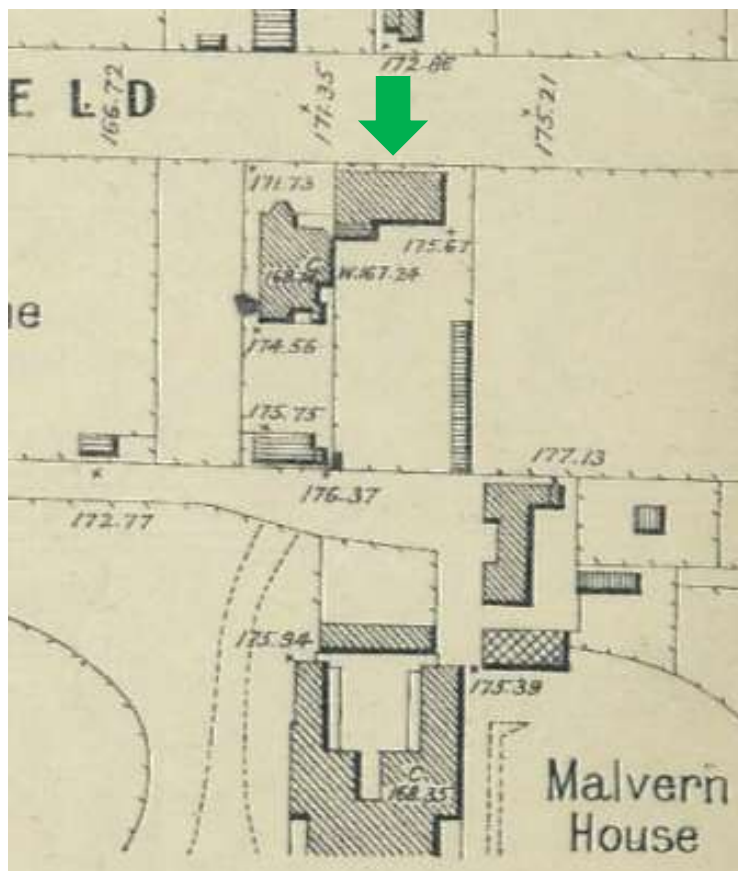
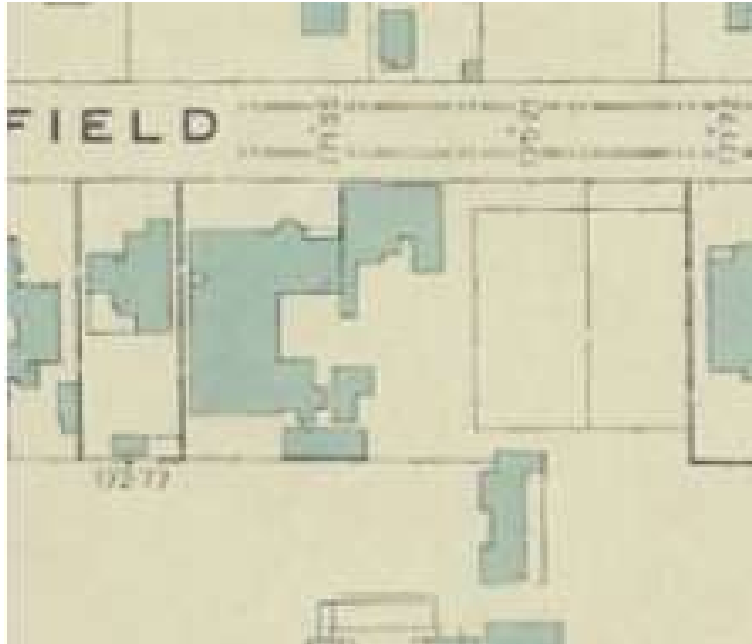


Figure 4. Footprint of the bluestone building in 1902, indicated by the green arrow. Detail of MMBW Malvern & Hawthorn No 58, dated 1902 (Source: SLV)



Figure 5. Detail of Aerial photograph, 1945, showing extent of the school property in the 1940s. (Source: Landata)



*Figure 6. Detail of MMBW Plan No 58, Hawthorn & Malvern, dated 1947, showing extent of the property in the 1940s. (Source: SLV)*