

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Koomba, 1 Spring Road, Malvern (HO336)



Figure 1. 1 Spring Road, Malvern (GJM Heritage, July 2020).

DATE: June 2021

Place type: House	Architect: George F Ballantyne, designer (1909) (attributed); Alec S Eggleston (1923 addition to north-west)
Construction Date: 1909 (rear additions 1923)	Builder: George F Ballantyne

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

Koomba at 1 Spring Road, Malvern was built in 1909 on land purchased by James Ballantyne of Myamyn, Glenferrie Road, Malvern in 1905. The purchased land was situated on the corner of Spring Road and High Street, opposite the Malvern Gardens, and had a frontage of 120 ft (36.6 m) to Spring Road. Ballantyne's son, John, a dentist, acquired this allotment in 1909 and an 8-roomed two-storey house was constructed that year (Malvern Rate Books). John married Edith Lillian Stephens in June 1909 and they lived at Koomba, Spring Road, Malvern (*Prahran Telegraph*, 12 Jun 1909:5).

John's brother, designer and builder George Frederick Ballantyne, designed and constructed several houses in the Malvern area (Raworth 2014) and it is highly probable that George designed and built the house at the subject site for his brother.

In 1911 the Ballantyne family purchased the two adjoining allotments to the north, with frontages of 52 ft and 50 ft (15.8 m & 15.2 m respectively), and a tennis court was added to the property (Lewis 1992). That year the house was described as a 12-roomed brick house (Malvern Rate Books). In 1923 additions and alterations were made to the house by architect Alec S Eggleston (SHC MB3067). This included the substantial addition of a billiard room to the north side at the rear of the house, and other minor additions and alterations to the rear.

Koomba was advertised for sale in 1935 (*Herald*, 9 Oct 1935:2) and the house and adjoining allotments were purchased by Edith and Reginald Johnston. The Johnstons remained at Koomba for 40 years, until 1975 when

the property was offered for sale (*Age*, 26 Jul 1975:31). The house at this time was described as a 14-roomed house with billiard room (*Age*, 7 Aug 1975:13).

Description Summary

The following description includes detail contained within 'City of Malvern Heritage Study', Lewis & Aitken, 1992.

Koomba is situated on the west side of Spring Road, north of High Street, opposite the lake and fountain in the Malvern Public Gardens. A lane forms the south boundary and later houses have been constructed on adjacent allotments to both the north and south.

Koomba is of a simple bungalow design with a single main gable roof extending down and changing pitch to form a wide verandah to the front and side returns. The terracotta tile roof is interrupted above the front entry by a projecting porch (now infilled) with hipped roof and weatherboard balustrade (originally shingle). The gable ends have deep recessed window openings. The ground floor is clad in red brick which is used in an expressive manner to form an unusual balustrade to the verandah with brick piers and capping. The building is symmetrical about the main entry stairs with symmetrical window bays within the wide verandah.

Key Features:

- Federation bungalow style house with symmetrical front elevation
- Attic-style house
- Red brick walls
- Unglazed terracotta tile-clad roof
- Simple overall massing with main transverse gable, and large gable and secondary hipped roofed wings to the rear
- Broad front roof plane with prominent central projecting hipped-roof balcony
- Exposed rafter ends
- Deep verandah across the front elevation with returns to both sides, forming a bellcast roof to the front elevation
- Brick piers and capped brick balustrade to the verandah, accessed from central flight of steps
- Symmetrical front window bays
- Simple brick chimneys with slim plate cappings
- Mature Canary Island Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*) and Eucalyptus sp. In front garden.

Intactness/Integrity

The house remains highly intact to its period of construction and retains a high degree of integrity. Shingles to the upper porch have been replaced with weatherboards.

References

B Raworth Pty Ltd, *City of Stonnington Interwar Houses Study*, 2014.

Context Pty Ltd, *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History*, 2006 & 2009 addendum.

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

Laceworks Landscape Cooperative, *City of Malvern Urban Character Study*, 1988.

Landata Victoria, historical aerial photograph, 1963.

Malvern Rate Books.

N Lewis & Associates, *City of Malvern Heritage Study*, 1992.

Prahran Telegraph.

Sands and McDougall Directories (S&M).

Stonnington Heritage Centre (SHC).

The Age.

The Herald.

Victorian Places, 'Malvern' & 'Malvern East', <http://www.victorianplaces.com.au>.

Historic Images and Plans

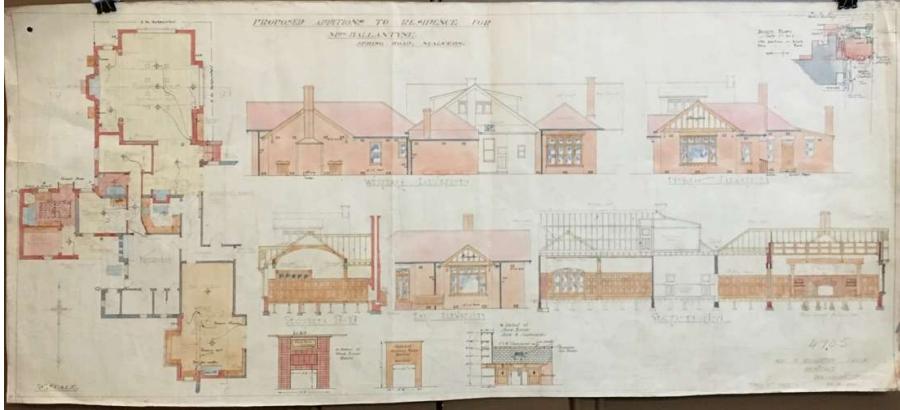


Figure 2. Proposed additions to residence for Mrs Ballantyne, Spring Road, Malvern 1923 (SHC MB3067).



Figure 4. Detail of a 1963 aerial showing the house and palm at the subject site (Landata).