

## HERITAGE CITATION

### House, 41 Elizabeth Street, Malvern



*Figure 1. 41 Elizabeth Street, Malvern (GJM Heritage, May 2021).*

DATE: June 2021

## HOUSE, 41 ELIZABETH STREET, MALVERN

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Place type:</b> House                               | <b>Architect:</b> Cocks and Carmichael                           |
| <b>Construction Date:</b> 1969                         | <b>Builder:</b> Design 70  |
| <b>Recommendation:</b> Include in the Heritage Overlay | <b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To the extent of the property boundary |

### Locality History

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

The land on which 41 Elizabeth Street is located originally formed part of a large allotment on the west side of Elizabeth Street (Figures 2 and 3). This allotment comprised a brick house, called 'Rubicon' which was owned and occupied by Edward Priestly and his wife, Alice (*Australasian*, 24 December 1898:55). In 1923, following the death of then owner, Thomas Robinson, the allotment was subdivided to create the Rubicon Estate. The estate comprised the blocks bounded by Beamsley Street to the north, Henderson Avenue to the west, Robinson Street to the south and Elizabeth Street to the east. The subdivision, comprising '13 fine home sites with frontages to Elizabeth Street and Robinson Street within a few minutes' walk of Malvern Road electric tram and Tooronga Station' (*Argus*, 13 October 1923:3) was auctioned for sale on 27 October 1923 (SHC MH643). The land on which 41 Elizabeth Street is located was purchased by Mr and Mrs Leslie Wood, who erected a five roomed timber cottage in 1925 (Malvern Rate Books). The cottage is evident in a 1945 aerial photograph (Figure 4).

The property at 41 Elizabeth Street was sold to Mr and Mrs John Harris in 1968 and the existing cottage demolished the same year. The following year, in 1969, a two-storey brick house with carport and swimming pool was constructed on the site (Malvern Valuation Field Card; SHC). The house, with its cathedral ceilings,

front garages and shaded patio and swimming pool, was built by short-lived project home building enterprise, Design 70 to designs by noted architects, Cocks and Carmichael (SHC; SLV). The property was sold in 1973 and again in 1985, at which time it was marketed as ‘an absolutely brilliant modern 2 storey family home – undoubtedly one of the finest you or we will ever see’ with emphasis given to the way the design ‘concentrates on providing a flood of natural light as well as gaining restful outlooks over beautiful gardens and greenery from all 10 rooms’ (Age, 5 October 1985:72).

In 1978 the front brick fence was extended in height (Malvern Valuation Field Card). Additional alterations have included the painting of the original garage doors, and the replacement of window glazing throughout the building.

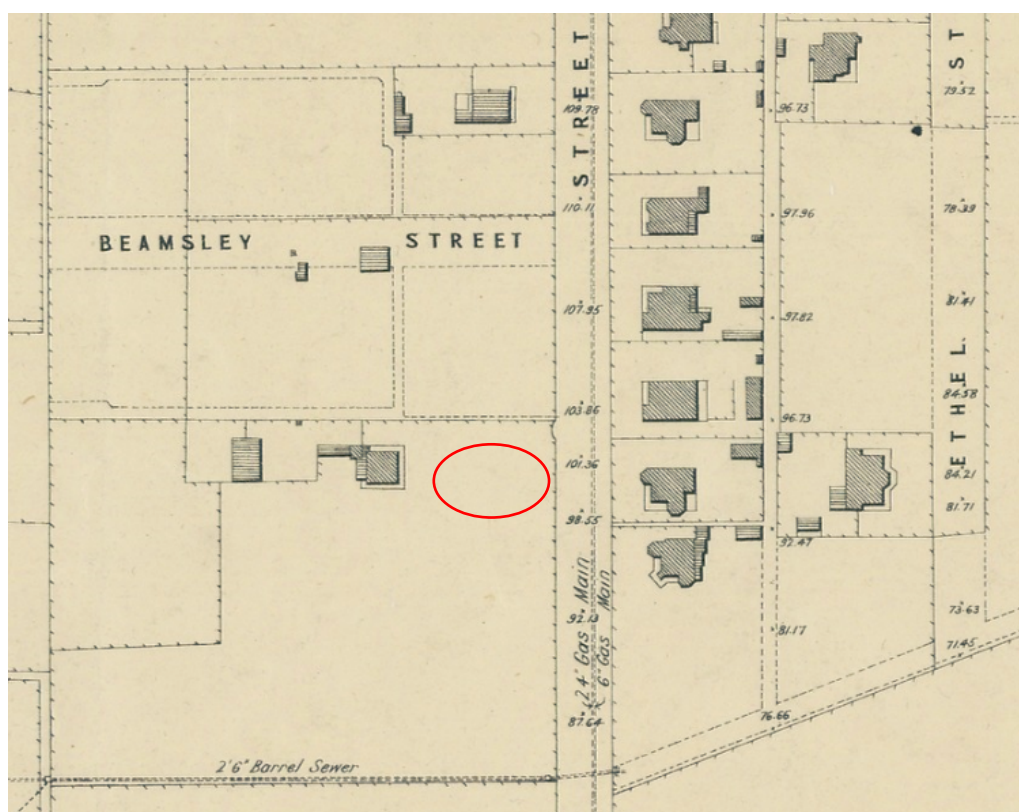


Figure 2. MMBW Base Plan No. 59 showing the vacant land to the west of Elizabeth Street, 1902. The approximate location of 41 Elizabeth Street is indicated (SLV)



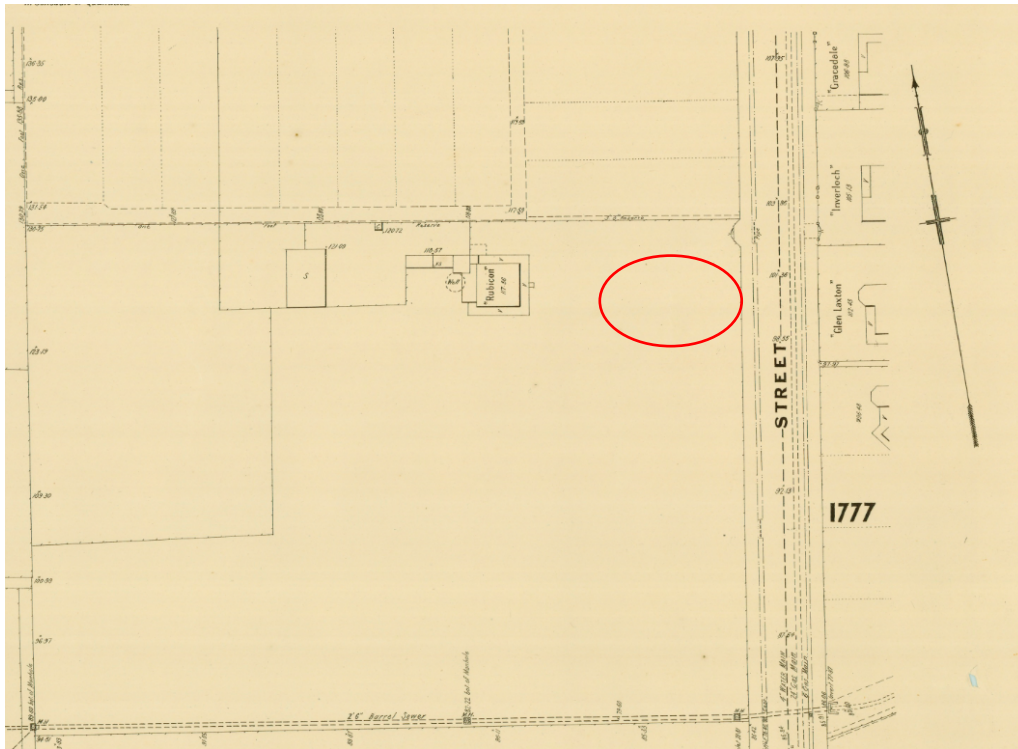


Figure 3. MMBW Detail Plan No. 1777 showing vacant land to the west of Elizabeth Street, 1902. The approximate location of 41 Elizabeth Street is indicated (SLV)



Figure 4. Aerial photograph showing 41 Elizabeth Street, 1945 prior to the construction of the existing house (Landata)

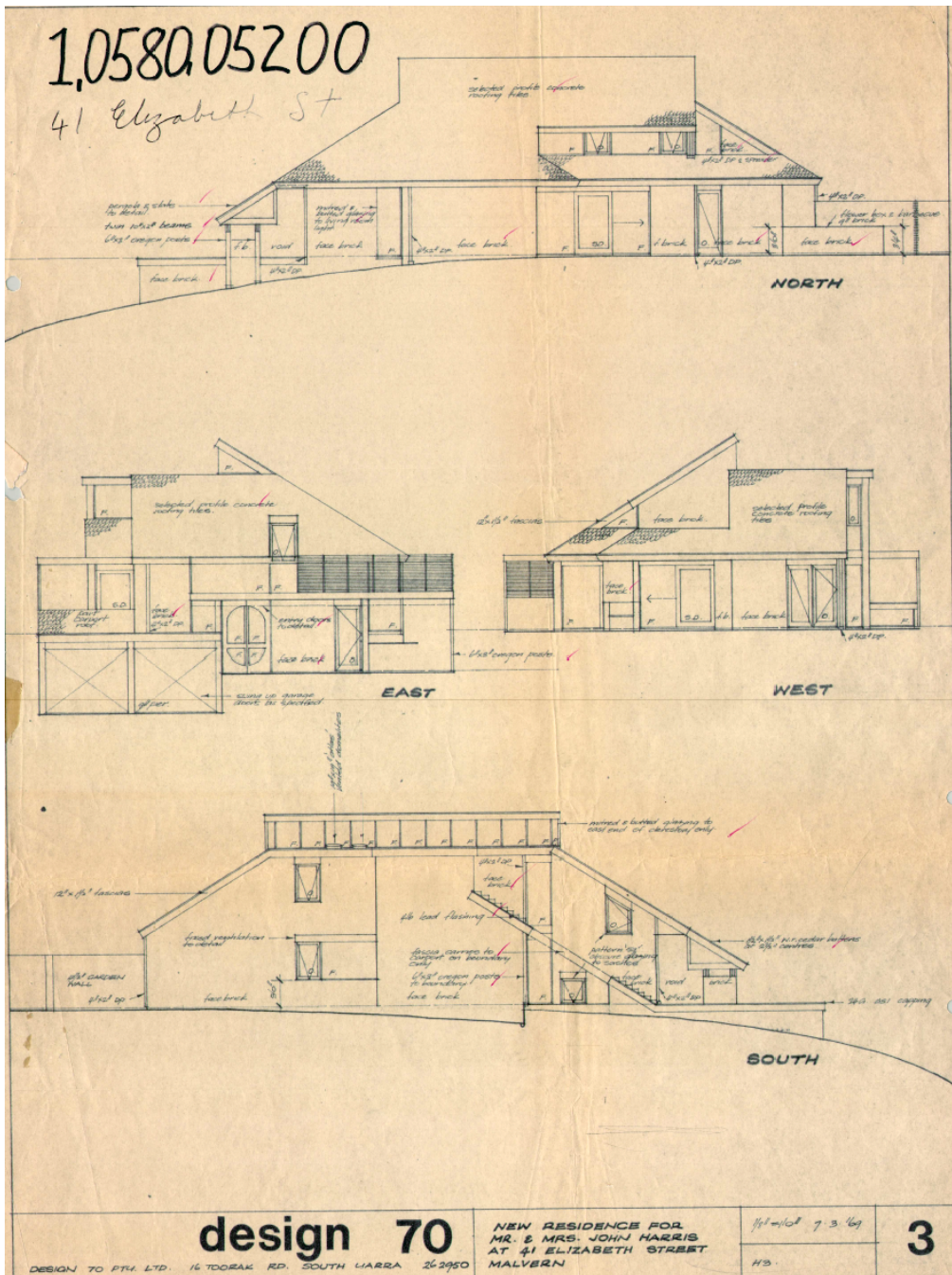


Figure 5. Architectural elevations for 41 Elizabeth Street, Malvern by Cocks and Carmichael, 7 March 1969 (SHC)





*Figure 5. Cocks and Carmichael design at 41 Elizabeth Street soon after completion, 1969 (SLV)*



*Figure 6. Cocks and Carmichael design at 41 Elizabeth Street soon after completion, 1969 (SLV)*



*Figure 7. Auction notice for 41 Elizabeth Street showing the rear of the property, 1985 (SLV)*

### **Cocks and Carmichael, architects**

The partnership of Cocks and Carmichael was established in 1968 by Robin Cocks and Peter Carmichael. Both graduated in architecture from the University of Melbourne in the mid-1960s. Prior to forming their partnership, Cocks worked for the McIntyre Partnership (1965) and Tompkins Shaw & Evans (1966-8), while Carmichael had worked for Bernard Hanmer & Associates (1966), then Richardson Hanmer (1967-8).

Cocks & Carmichael was heavily involved in the project homes industry in the 1960s and 1970s, focusing on the provision of affordable and sustainable housing. The firm's initial design approach was characterised by steep split-level roof forms and the use of brick seconds and they designed some of Melbourne's most innovative project houses, many located on the Mornington Peninsula, in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Goad 2012:160). During this time, the firm were consultant architects to Design 70, a short-lived project home building company based in South Yarra, as well as Civic Constructions, a project home building company founded in Sydney in 1960 which expanded to Melbourne in 1969 (MAAS). Cocks & Carmichael also became consultant architects to Merchant Builders, one of Australia's most influential project house-building companies, in the late 1970s. During the 1980s, the firm moved into other fields, including urban design. The Yarra footbridge, Southbank (1989) is perhaps one of their best-known designs (Goad 2012:160).

### **Historical Themes**

The place illustrates the following themes as outlined in *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*:

- 6 Building towns, cities and the garden state
  - 6.7 Making homes for Victorians

### **Description**

The house at 41 Elizabeth Street is located on the western side of Elizabeth Street between Robinson and Beamsley Streets. The site is rectangular with its long axis running approximately east-west. A double garage occupies the southern portion of the street frontage and is set back from the front boundary approximately 4.5m. A walled courtyard and pedestrian access occupy the northern portion of the street frontage. The house itself is set back from the front boundary by approximately 9m. The site slopes gradually upwards from the southeast corner to the northwest.

The house comprises a two-storey brick building with complex roof forms: various skillion roofs, hipped where they intersect at right angles, are clad in darkly-coloured concrete tiles (labelled on the original drawings as being 'roman' profile), whereas flat roofs over the central section of the main building and the carport roof are clad in profiled metal sheeting. The apices and the angled side elevations of the skillion roofs are flush with the wall and are overflashed with a simple timber fascia, whereas the lowest roof edges feature projecting eaves. Walls are uniformly of face clinker brick. Door and window frames are timber and have likely been replaced. A tall chimney is located at the north elevation and is simply detailed, with a steel cowl.

The house is organised into approximately four wings that step up the sloping site to the northwest. The building carefully responds to the site and the functions of each internal space by arranging window and door openings to maximise natural light, for example the double-height living room space has a sweeping cathedral ceiling with a clerestory window at the apex. The building presents as a complex, albeit deliberate and controlled, form when viewed from the street.

Mature trees are evident to the rear (west) backyard, and the front courtyard entry contains established medium-height plantings.



#### Key Features:

- Deliberate siting and organisation of internal spaces to create a complex external built form
- Complex roof forms, especially the skillion roofs
- Face clinker brick, concrete tiled roof, timber detailing and garden paving
- Integrated garage and walled courtyard entry.

#### Intactness/Integrity

The house at 41 Elizabeth Street retains a high degree of integrity in fabric, form and detail. While the house has undergone some alterations, including increasing the height of the fence height, the replacement of windows and painting of the original garage doors, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as an example of a 1960s project home in the City of Stonnington.

#### Comparative Analysis

The house at 41 Elizabeth Street is of note as a highly intact example of a post-war project home. Designed by the notable architectural practice Cocks & Carmichael and project home builders Design 70, it is one of a large number of project homes designed in a Modernist architectural style that were constructed across Victoria in the post-war period.

From the 1950s, well-known architects such as Robin Boyd, Graeme Gunn and Peter McIntyre began to focus their attention and skills on the concept of affordable homes. Working closely with project builders in an effort to provide lower-cost options, these architects began designing small, deceptively simple houses that offered economical and contemporary options suited to a suburban family lifestyle.

As noted in *Designer Suburbs: Architects and Affordable Homes in Australia* (2012):

*The project home was synonymous to many with the embodiment of the 'Australian dream', that saw home ownership as the foundation of family life. It became a new cultural phenomenon through the link between affordable construction and architectural ideas representing aspirations about living in suburbia* (O'Callaghan & Pickett 2012:vii).

The introduction of energy efficient, environmentally friendly, architect designed project homes in Victoria in the 1960s and 1970s was pioneered by influential project housing company, Merchant Builders. The company, which was particularly invested in increasing density in Melbourne's inner and outer suburbs without losing the connection with landscape, promoted the idea that house, interiors, landscape and site should be harmoniously integrated. This concept was adopted by a number of practicing architects in the ensuing years, including the partnership of Cocks & Carmichael (MSD 2015:61). Cocks & Carmichael worked as consultant architects for a number of project home building companies, including Design 70, Civic Constructions and Merchant Builders, and promoted similar concepts of establishing a strong connection with the outdoors and creating harmony within a setting.

The house at 41 Elizabeth Street appears to have few direct comparators within Malvern and no examples of project homes are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme on an individual basis. The house is important as a highly intact example of a post-war project home, designed by well-known architectural firm, Cocks & Carmichael, as an affordable family housing option in the City of Stonnington.

## Assessment against Criteria

Following is an assessment of the place against the recognised heritage criteria set out in *Planning Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay* (August 2018).

### ***Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history***

The house at 41 Elizabeth Street has a clear association with the project homes industry in Victoria in the post-war period and is illustrative of post-war suburban development in the City of Stonnington. It demonstrates the shift towards lower-cost, architect-designed housing which characterised suburban development across Victoria in the late-twentieth century.

### ***Criterion D: Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments***

The house at 41 Elizabeth Street is a highly intact representative example of Modernist suburban housing built in the City of Stonnington in the postwar period. It displays key characteristics of this type of housing, including an integrated approach to house and site, a strong connection with the outdoors and harnessing natural light, a neutral colour palette, and the use of natural materials such as timber and brick.

### ***Criterion E: Importance in displaying particular aesthetic characteristics***

The house at 41 Elizabeth Street is a well-resolved and carefully-detailed example of an architect-designed post-war project home. Designed by noted architects Cocks & Carmichael for project home builders Design 70, the house – with its asymmetrical composition, complex series of roof forms, and brick construction – set within an integrated landscaped setting, presents a picturesque composition of this building type.

## Grading and Recommendations

It is recommended that the place be included in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme as a locally significant heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Stonnington Planning Scheme:

|   |    |
|---|----|
| External Paint Controls?                                | No |
| Internal Alteration Controls?                           | No |
| Tree Controls?  | No |
| Outbuildings or Fences not exempt under Clause 43.01-3? | No |
| Prohibited Uses Permitted?                              | No |
| Aboriginal Heritage Place?                              | No |

## Extent of the Recommended Heritage Overlay

To the extent of the property boundary as shown in Figure 8 below.



Figure 8. Recommended Extent of Heritage Overlay

## References

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.

J O'Callaghan and C Pickett, *Designer Suburbs, Architects and affordable homes in Australia*, Sydney, 2012.

Malvern Rate Books.

Malvern Valuation Field Card.

Museum of Applied Arts and Science, 'Drawings, house design, Civic X5, Cocks and Carmichael Architects, Civic Constructions, Australia', <https://collection.maas.museum/object/472122>

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Base Plan No. 59, 1902.

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Detail Plan No. 1777, 1902.

Melbourne School of Design (MSD), *Merchant Builders: towards a new archive*, Melbourne, 2015.

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

State Library of Victoria.

Stonnington History Centre (SHC).

*The Age*.

*The Australasian*.

*The Argus*.

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