

HERITAGE CITATION

Former Maisonettes, 9 Embling Road, Malvern



Figure 1. 9 Embling Road, Malvern (GJM Heritage, December 2020).

DATE: June 2021

FORMER MAISONETTES, 9 EMBLING ROAD, MALVERN

Place type: Residential Flats/Maisonettes	Architect: Oakley & Parkes
Construction Date: 1936	Builder: W Machin
Recommendation: Include in the Heritage Overlay	Extent of Overlay: 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 maisonettes at 9 Embling Road were built in 1936 to designs by architectural firm, Oakley & Parkes. The land on which the property is located originally formed part of Crown Portion 7 in the Gardiner District of the Parish of Prahran.

Embling Road and Haverbrack Avenue were laid out in 1888 when the Haverbrack Estate was subdivided (Cooper 1935:121, 173). By 1902, four weatherboard cottages, each with three to four rooms, had been constructed on the subject site to the west of the intersection with Bride Street (Malvern Rate Books). The 1902 Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plans (Nos. 1759 & 1760) show that, with the exception of a small number of residences to the west and east of Bride Street (including on the subject site), Embling Road remained largely undeveloped at this time (Figure 2). This was a direct result of the 1890s economic depression which stalled building activity across Victoria. The cottages can be seen in a c.1925-1935 aerial photograph of Malvern (Figure 3).

By 1935, the four cottages (numbered 9-15 Embling Road) were owned by Mrs Mary A Markillie of the Malvern Hotel, who leased the properties to various tenants (Malvern Rate Books; Victorian Electoral Rolls). The

cottages were purchased by Mary Creed of 8 Embling Road the following year (LV:V6175/F954), at which time they were demolished and replaced with three brick maisonettes designed in a 'modern adaptation of the Old English style of two-storeyed residences' by architects, Oakley and Parkes (*Herald*, 1 April 1936:25). Each maisonette comprised a similar layout, with large entrance halls, lounge rooms, dining rooms and kitchens on the ground floor; and two to three large bedrooms with built-in wardrobes and bathrooms on the upper level. The builder for the new maisonettes was W Machin of Denbigh Road, Armadale (*Herald*, 1 April 1936:25). The new building featured in the *Herald*, with particular attention given to 'the provision of entirely separate front and rear entrances' and the 'sense of privacy' afforded by the building design and layout (*Herald*, 1 April 1936:25). An accompanying photograph shows the maisonettes soon after their construction (Figure 4).

In August 1941, Arthur Augustus and Ethel Mary Levy purchased all three maisonettes, described as 'brick flats with five rooms', for £6400 (Malvern Rate Books). The Levys resided at Flat 2 (then addressed as 13 Embling Road) and leased out the remaining two flats. Arthur Levy died in 1947 and his wife Ethel continued to reside at the property until her own death in 1956. The following year, the whole property was purchased by Mr Lawrence Reginald Fitzmaurice. He also resided at Flat 2 and continued to lease out the remaining two maisonettes. By 1959, the property was 'known as No 9 [Embling Road]' (Malvern Rate Books). Fitzmaurice continued to own and lease the property until his death in 1970 (LV:6205/F973). The property has been sold a number of times in the ensuing years and has more recently been converted into a single residence.

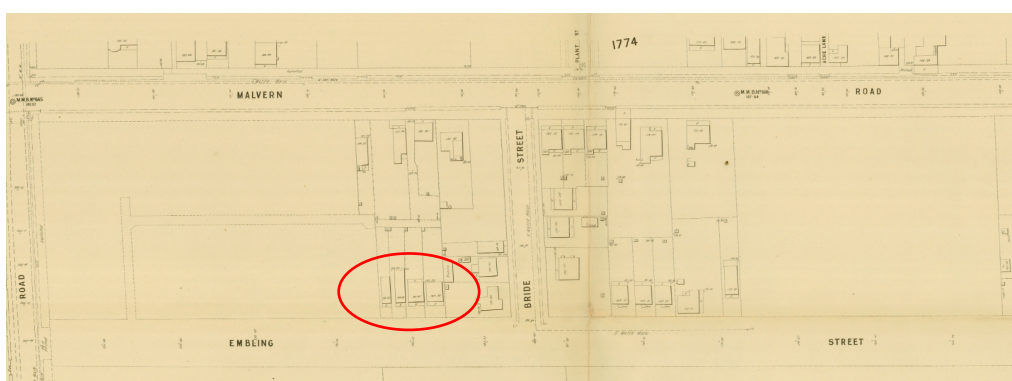


Figure 2. MMBW Detail Plan No 1759 showing the four weatherboard cottages that originally occupied the subject site (circled in red), 1902 (SLV)



Figure 3. Detail of aerial view of Malvern looking north over the Malvern Town Hall and cricket ground showing the four weatherboard cottages that originally occupied the subject site (circled in red) (SLV).



Figure 4. Illustration showing the newly constructed maisonettes at 9 Embling Road, 1936 (Herald).

Oakley & Parkes, architects

The following includes detail contained in the 'Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture', 2012.

Oakley & Parkes (1926-1955) was formed through the partnership of Melbourne-born architects Percy Oakley and Stanley Parkes. Oakley commenced practising as an architect in 1908 and formed a partnership with A S Eggleston in 1914. Oakley established his own practice in 1923 following the dissolution of Eggleston & Oakley in 1923. Parkes, who had studied at the Working Men's College (now RMIT University) and the University of Melbourne before being articled with Eggleston & Oakley, moved with Oakley. At Oakley & Parkes, Parkes concentrated on the design work, while Oakley was responsible for seeking new clients, administration and specifications.

In 1926, following the official establishment of Oakley & Parkes, the firm was commissioned to design 'The Lodge' in Canberra, intended as a temporary residence for the Prime Minister of Australia. They designed 150 houses in Canberra and completed over 370 projects overall, which included a diverse range of place types including houses, factories, both small-scale and large-scale office buildings, pubs, banks, churches and shops. Notable commissions included the Rippon Lea mansion entrance lodge (1926) and the Brighton Sea Baths (1936).

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 maisonettes at 9 Embling Road are situated on the north side of Embling Road, in close proximity to the intersection of Glenferrie and Malvern Roads.

The two-storey building of rendered (overpainted) masonry construction with tile-clad hipped roofs, was built as three maisonettes that were intended to read as a single large dwelling. The building has since been converted into a single residence. The building is L-shaped in plan, and this – combined with the generous setback from the front (Embling Street) boundary – provides for a formal garden setting and gated entry. The

maisonettes were designed to share a single entry which is located at the junction of the two perpendicular wings and is emphasised by a two-storey portico.

The asymmetrically massed building features Old English style detailing, including flush gable ends, steeply-pitched tiled roofs, tall chimneys, decorative brickwork (including herringbone brickwork to the upper sections of the gable ends), multipaned timber-framed windows and an oriel window.

Key Features:

- Asymmetrical massing
- Main hipped roof form with prominent projecting flush gable ends
- Rendered masonry walls with contrasting dark, decorative face brick highlights to elements including window heads, upper section of gable ends, and chimney caps
- Unglazed terracotta tiles to roofs
- Two-storey entry portico with balcony above
- Simple, tall chimneys with brick capping
- Garden setting, including formal entry arrangement.

Intactness/Integrity

The building at 9 Embling Road, Malvern remains highly intact to its original construction in 1936. Overall, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

Comparative Analysis

9 Embling Road is of note as a fine and highly intact example of an interwar residential development built in the City of Stonnington. It is one of a substantial number of residential maisonettes/flats that were constructed in the municipality in the interwar period.

The development of residential flats and maisonettes in Melbourne gained in popularity following World War I. This was the result of a number of factors, including a shortage of skilled labour, the high cost of building materials, and the difficulties associated with maintaining large estates (Sawyer 1982:33). The requirement for efficient use of labour and materials led to an increased interest in flat/maisonette development. Shared services and land were considered an attractive prospect for investors.

Wealthy, inner-city suburbs that were infused with character and sited close to public transport and shops were popular locations for flat and maisonette development. Within the City of Stonnington, the highly affluent suburbs of Toorak and South Yarra were particularly sought after for their proximity to the city and a number of substantial flat/maisonette developments were constructed in these suburbs in the 1920s and 1930s. These were often of a grand scale and designed by prominent Melbourne architects.

Flat and maisonette development was popular across the entire municipality in the interwar period, with substantial numbers of these developments also constructed in the suburbs of Prahran, Windsor, Armadale, Kooyong and Malvern. Often of a more modest scale than the 'luxury flats' constructed in Toorak and South Yarra, these developments varied in their scale, layout, planning and architectural design. In keeping with the strong culture of patronage between architects and owners at the time, many flats and maisonettes constructed in Stonnington in this period were designed by well-known Melbourne architects.

Within the City of Stonnington, a number of interwar residential flats/maisonettes remain to demonstrate this historic theme and examples of these are included in the Heritage Overlay on an individual basis. Those that are comparable to 9 Embling Road include:

- Hillingdon, 383 Glenferrie Road, Malvern (1919), HO436
- Basford Flats, 203 Dandenong Road, Windsor (1919-20), HO433
- Mont Clair, 321 Dandenong Road, Prahran (1921 & 1926), HO434
- Silverton Flats, 698 Orrong Road, Toorak (1927), HO445
- Quantox Flats, 9 Church Street, Toorak (1928-29), HO431
- Koonoona Flats, 754 High Street, Armadale (1933), HO439
- Colywn, 1263 High Street, Malvern (1937), HO440
- Granada Flats, 537 Orrong Road, Armadale (1939), HO444.

These properties vary in scale and form and demonstrate a broad range of architectural styles, reflecting the diversity of this building type within the municipality. They are recognised for their high levels of intactness and fine detailing, and as well-designed examples of particular architectural styles.

In a similar manner, 9 Embling Road is a well-designed example of an interwar residential maisonette development and retains a high degree of integrity to clearly demonstrate the characteristics of this building type. Designed by noted architects, Oakley and Parkes, it is a finely detailed and highly intact example of a residential maisonette development built in the City of Stonnington in the interwar period.

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

9 Embling Road is illustrative of the suburban development of Malvern in the interwar period when a number of residential flats/maisonettes were constructed across the suburb. This type of development was largely a result of increased labour and materials costs following World War I. The impetus for the efficient use of labour and materials led to an increased interest in flat/maisonette development, where shared services and land were considered an attractive prospect for investors. The maisonettes at 9 Embling Road clearly illustrate this important phase of development of Malvern and the City of Stonnington more broadly.

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

9 Embling Road is a fine and highly intact representative example of an interwar residential maisonette development in the City of Stonnington. It displays typical features of this building type from this period in Malvern and across Stonnington more broadly, including a substantial two-storey form set on a large site, communal entrance and stairs, tile-clad hipped roofs, and a garden setting. It is notable as a well-resolved example of a residential maisonette development designed to appear as a single residence, which was a particularly desirable characteristic of this building type in the interwar period.

Criterion E: Importance in displaying particular aesthetic characteristics

9 Embling Road is a well-considered and carefully detailed example of a residential maisonette development designed in the Interwar Old English style by noted architects Oakley and Parkes. The design, with projecting

gables and intersecting hipped roof bay, together with the use of distinctive architectural elements, including contrasting brickwork to openings and gable ends, terracotta roof tiles, faceted entrance bay with balcony above and prominent chimneys, set within a garden setting presents a picturesque composition of this architectural style.

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 5 below.



Figure 5. 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.

Land Victoria (LV), Certificates of Title, as cited above.

Malvern Rate Books.

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Detail Plan No. 1759, 1902.

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

Sands and McDougall Directories (S&M).

T Sawyer, *Residential Flats in Melbourne: the development of a building type to 1950*, 1982.

Stonnington History Centre (SHC).

The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture, edited by Philip Goad and Julie Willis, 2012.

The Herald.

Victorian Electoral Rolls.

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