

HERITAGE CITATION

House, 1225 Malvern Road, Malvern



Figure 1. 1225 Malvern Road, Malvern (GJM Heritage, December 2020).

DATE: June 2021

HOUSE, 1225 MALVERN ROAD, MALVERN

Place Type: House	Architect: Not known
Construction Date: c1870s	Builder: Not known
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

Located far from the centre of Melbourne, with no reliable roads or transport systems, the land beyond Kooyong Road attracted little suburban development before the 1880s, apart from a small concentration of houses and shops around the intersection of Glenferrie and Malvern roads (Context 2009:41).

Charles B C Skinner acquired the remote allotment (Crown Allotment 25) at the intersection of Malvern and Glenferrie roads in 1853 and planned an estate in the style of an English village, naming 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 in 1853 (replaced 1861). 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 (Context 2009:41, 114).

The house at 1225 Malvern Road formed part of Crown Portion 24 in the District of Gardiner, Parish of Prahran, which was originally granted to Robert A Balbirnie (Parish Plan). In 1852 Balbirnie sold a large portion of this property to Philip Foot, who on-sold a reduced extent (including the subject site) to Thomas Charles Robinson

in February 1860. In the 1870s Robinson sold the majority of the property to William Woodmason, who subdivided much of the land around Acre Place, but retained the subject site (General Law Notes).

The early history of the subject site is difficult to discern, as a second Thomas Robinson (who died in January 1896) was also a land holder in the immediate area.¹ Rate book information is therefore only reliable when names were listed by location. The municipal rate books listed names by location (not alphabetically) from 1882, when Thomas Robinson was listed as the owner and occupant of a house and land (Net Annual Value of £18) on the north side of Malvern Road. It is likely however that the house was constructed prior to this date (a Thomas Robinson is listed in earlier rate books and a Thomas Robinson is listed at Malvern Road in the *Sands & McDougall Directory* in 1875). Robinson occupied the house until 1888 (Malvern Rate Books), after which time he resided at Munro Place, Armadale until his death in 1891 (*Table Talk*, 16 Oct 1891:14).

In 1892 the subject site was sold by Susannah Robinson (executrix of Thomas C Robinson) to John Kingston, a labourer (General Law Notes). At this date the extent of the property was similar to what exists in 2021 (the property described with a 24' frontage) (Malvern Rate Books). The house was let to tenants during this period.

Upon Kingston's death in 1900, his estate was advertised for sale in the *Argus* (21 Feb 1900:2) and the house was described as a weatherboard cottage of four rooms 'on land 24.3 to Malvern Road, by 134.6 along Acre Lane'. The property subsequently sold to Arthur Parsons in 1900, who let the house to tenants (General Law Notes).

A 1907 Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan (Figures 2 and 3) shows the footprint of the house with a small setback from the front boundary, occupied by a verandah². The plan also shows that Acre Place was narrower at the entrance off Malvern Road, adjacent to the house. In 1907 the *Malvern Standard* (22 Jun 1907:3) published a letter from Mr C U Robertson:

... requesting that Acre Lane, a street off Malvern road, should be made a uniform width of 20 feet, the present entrance to which was only 11 feet, and the desire was that this be widened by 9ft. so as to make the entrance 20ft.

... The matter, which was favourably received by the council, was referred to the Public Works Committee.

In July 1907 Council agreed to contribute the required amount to the widening of Acre Place at the Malvern Road entrance (*Malvern Standard*, 6 July 1907:3). It is more likely however that the laneway was narrowed at its northern end to address this inconsistency in width, as the house at 1225 Malvern Road was built right to the laneway and any widening of the laneway would have required its demolition or relocation.

From c1910, George F Keedle, carter, was listed as the owner and occupant of the house (Malvern Rate Books). Following Keedle's death in 1939, the property was granted to Alice Keedle, who left the property to Myrtle Rollinson and Eleanor Gerock, both of 1225 Malvern Road, in 1968 (LV:V5282/F366). An oblique aerial dated c1925-c1935 shows the façade and west elevation of the house in the early twentieth-century (Figure 3). A later 1945 aerial shows the extent of the house and outbuildings (Figure 4). At this date an addition is evident

¹ This second Thomas Robinson (died 1896) was a market gardener, with a vineyard in the 1870s, living in Elizabeth Street in the late nineteenth century. His 1896 probate files indicate that he owned parts of Crown Portion 23A and 24 in the Parish of Prahran. Early rate book entries (when names are listed alphabetically) possibly refer to this second Thomas Robinson (RB; Cooper 1935:130-31; PROV probate).

² The house appears to have a deeper setback from the front boundary in 2021 however no boundary realignments were determined. A site inspection of the exterior of the house in 2021 did not suggest that the house has been moved or majorly altered in any way.

off the rear of the house and a small outbuilding is located to the north. Both structures appear to remain in 2021.

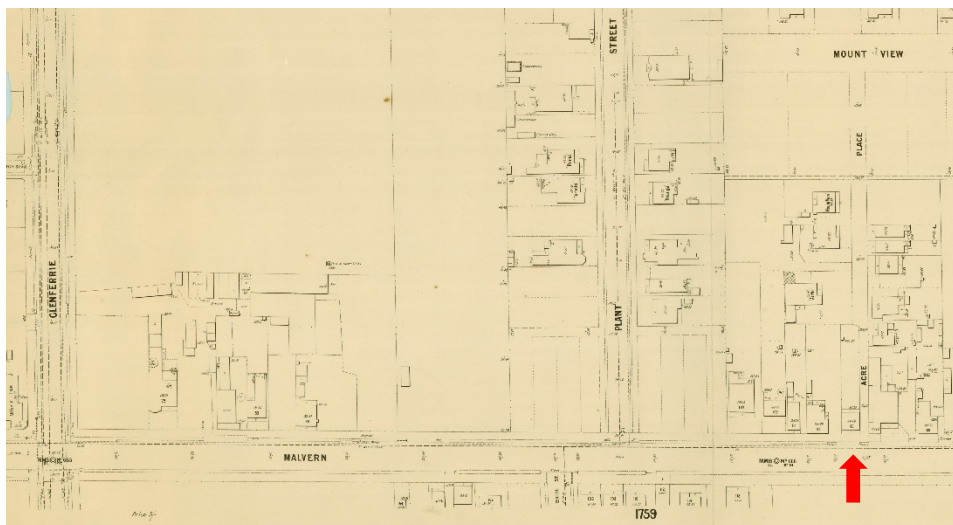


Figure 2. MMBW Detail Plan No 1774 showing the property at 1225 Malvern Road (indicated by red arrow) in relation to the Glenferrie and Malvern roads intersection, 1907 (SLV)

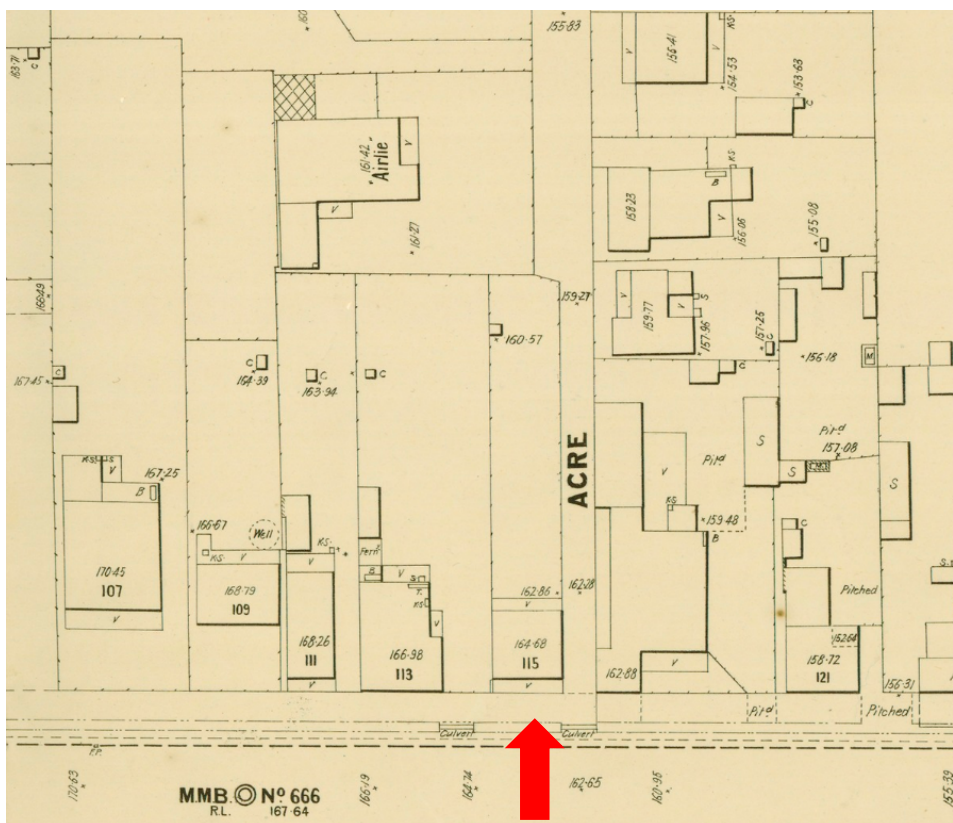


Figure 3. MMBW Detail Plan No 1774 showing the property at 1225 Malvern Road (then addressed as no 115, indicated by red arrow), 1907 (SLV)



Figure 4. An oblique aerial showing the house at 1225 Malvern Road, c1925-1935, indicated by red arrow (SLV)



Figure 5. Aerial photograph showing the house at 1225 Malvern Road, 1945 (Landata Victoria)

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
 - 6.3 Shaping the suburbs
 - 6.7 Making homes for Victorians

Description

The house at 1225 Malvern Road is located on the north side of Malvern Road, east of Glenferrie Road, with Acre Place forming the eastern boundary of the deep allotment. Set close to the front boundary behind a later picket fence, the house occupies the entire width of the narrow allotment.

The house is a modest single-storey timber building, comprising a main transverse gable-roofed section with flush eaves and hipped roof verandah supported on stop chamfered timber posts to the principal (south) elevation, and large skillion roofed section at the rear. All roofs are clad with corrugated metal sheeting and one red brick corbelled chimney is located at the west end of the front gable roof. A central door and flanking windows are timber-framed and symmetrically arranged at the front elevation, and single double hung windows are located on the east and west elevations. The window to the west wall, with fine mullions dividing the sashes into two smaller panes, fine timber framing and a ribbed timber hood, may date from the earliest period of construction.

A high paling fence extends along the Acre Place boundary from the rear of the house and a roller door has been inserted at the north end to enable car access to the property. Two sheds (later) are located at the western boundary of the rear yard.

Key Features:

- Simple gabled-roof form with front verandah and large rear skillion-roof form
- Symmetry across principal (south) elevation
- Timber wall cladding and corrugated metal roof cladding
- Simple detailing including red brick corbelled chimney and timber framing to openings
- Flush eaves to the principal (south) elevation
- Window to west wall with divided sashes, fine timber framing and ribbed timber hood, possibly dating to the earliest period of construction.

Intactness/Integrity

The house at 1225 Malvern Road retains a high degree of integrity to the Victorian period in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone some minor alterations, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as an example of a house dating to the Victorian period.

Comparative Analysis

The house at 1225 Malvern Road is of note as an intact example of a timber house likely dating to the c1870s in the City of Stonnington and is one of few houses remaining from the early development of Malvern.

Prior to the 1880s, land to the east of present-day Kooyong Road, in what is now the suburb of Malvern, attracted little suburban development due to its distance from the city and lack of decent roads and transport. The land was instead taken up by market gardens, pastoral and agricultural holdings and other pursuits, such as brickmaking. A small concentration of houses and shops located around the Glenferrie and Malvern Road intersection was the extent of development in the area (Context 2009:41). In the 1880s Melbourne experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity, growth and development and Malvern experienced a burst of suburban development as land developers subdivided and auctioned choice building sites on housing estates, and builders rapidly covered them with houses (Context 2009:41). While a substantial number of Victorian houses remain in Malvern to demonstrate this boom period, there are few examples of houses dating to the earlier 1870s period. Only two pre-1880s houses in Malvern are included in the Heritage Overlay of the

Stonnington Planning Scheme on an individual basis: 'Belgrave House' at 1219-1225 Dandenong Road, Malvern East (HO306) and 'Glendearg' at 196 Wattletree Road, Malvern (HO116).

'Belgrave House' (constructed 1873) is a substantial two-storey masonry dwelling that is of significance as a 'landmark to this major intersection (Dandenong Road and Belgrave Road) that reflects the earliest development of the area. It has important historic associations with local government and the history of world cinema' (Graeme Butler and Laceworks, *Malvern City Urban Character Study*, 1989). In form and historical use, it is not a directly relevant comparator to the house at 1225 Malvern Road.

'Glendearg', constructed by 1855, is a single-storey timber house with steel-clad roof, prominent chimneys and broad return-verandah. The property was associated with the Wattletree Hotel, which operated at the site from the 1850s to 1866. The property is considered to be of historical significance as one of the earliest surviving houses in the municipality and for its association with one of the first hotels established in Malvern, and of rarity value as one of the few houses in the municipality remaining from the 1850s. In terms of its form, early construction and historic use, 'Glendearg' is a direct comparator to the house at 1225 Malvern Road.

In addition to 'Glendearg', four other examples of pre-1880s timber cottages within the broader municipality are included in the Heritage Overlay on an individual basis. These include:

- 30 MacFarlan Street, South Yarra, 1850 (HO74)
- 5 George Street, Prahran, 1855 (HO39)
- 3 Macquarie Street, Prahran, 1875 (HO161)
- 5 Macquarie Street, Prahran, 1875 (HO162)

These properties are of significance for their early construction dates, high levels of intactness, and as rare surviving examples of small cottages from the early to mid-Victorian period in their respective suburbs. Additional significance is attributed to 30 MacFarlan Street for its associations with early industries in South Yarra and to 3 & 5 Macquarie Street as fine examples of the Carpenter Gothic architectural style.

In a similar manner, the house at 1225 Malvern Road retains a high degree of integrity to clearly demonstrate the characteristics of a Victorian cottage dating to c.1870s in the City of Stonnington. It is of note as a rare remnant of the early settlement of the area, which pre-dates the suburban development of Malvern from the 1880s onwards.

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 1225 Malvern Road is of historical significance for its strong associations with the early settlement of Malvern when a small number of houses and shops were constructed near the intersection of Glenferrie and Malvern roads between the 1850s and 1880s. Constructed in the c1870s, the house clearly illustrates this important and early phase of development in Malvern, and the City of Stonnington more broadly.

Criterion B: Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history

The house at 1225 Malvern Road is one of a small number of houses in Malvern remaining from the pre-1880s development of the suburb, and one of few houses remaining on Malvern Road dating to the Victorian period. Likely built in the 1870s, the simple timber house displays features of mid-Victorian housing in Malvern and across Melbourne more broadly, including its weatherboard construction and simple gabled roof form with

front verandah. The house remains highly intact to provide evidence of the early development of Malvern, and the City of Stonnington more broadly.

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 6 below.



PROPOSED HO EXTENT

Figure 6. Recommended Extent of Heritage Overlay

References

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

General Law Notes, Application Nos 46270 and 25556.

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

Landata Historic Aerial Photographs.

Land Victoria Title Certificates.

Malvern Rate Books.

Malvern Standard.

Malvern Valuation Field Cards.

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Detail Plan No 1774, 1907.

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

Parish Plan of Prahran.

Sands and McDougall Directories (S&M).

State Library of Victoria.

Stonnington History Centre (SHC).

Table Talk.

The Argus.

Victorian Electoral Rolls, accessed via ancestry.com.

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