

## HERITAGE CITATION

### Hamilton Close Cluster Housing, 1 & 9 Hamilton Road, Malvern



*Figure 1. Part of the Hamilton Close Cluster Housing at 1 & 9 Hamilton Road and Hamilton Close, Malvern (GJM Heritage, 2021).*

DATE: June 2021

## HAMILTON CLOSE CLUSTER HOUSING, 1 & 9 HAMILTON ROAD, MALVERN

<b>Place type:</b> Cluster Housing	<b>Architect:</b> Bates Smart & McCutcheon
<b>Construction Date:</b> 1977-81	<b>Builder:</b> Glenvill Homes
<b>Recommendation:</b> Remove from HO182 and include in the Heritage Overlay as an Individual Heritage Place	<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 Hamilton Close Cluster Housing development at 1 & 9 Hamilton Road, Malvern was built in stages from 1977 to 1981 to designs by prominent architectural firm, Bates Smart & McCutcheon.

The land on which the development is located originally formed part of Crown Allotment 24 in the District of Gardiner. Following subdivision of the land, in c.1885, a substantial brick mansion with 30 rooms, designed by architect Francis Malony White, was built on the site for Mrs S H Officer. In 1890, the large estate was sold to landowner, Joseph Bartlett Davies, who named the house Glenbervie. It was renamed Malvern House in c.1900. The 1902 Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Plan (Figure 2) shows the extensive land holding of Malvern House, located to the east of Glenferrie Road, and the layout of the mansion. Hamilton Road had not been laid out at that time (GJM 2021:5).

In 1907 Davies sold the property to pastoralist and racehorse breeder, Alexander Creswick, who renamed the property Yarrien. The Creswicks lived at Yarrien until 1918 when the property was sold to sisters, Isabel and Robina Hamilton. At that time Isabel was Principal and Robina a teacher, at Toorak College and in 1919 the

school relocated from Douglas Street in Toorak to Yarrien in Glenferrie Road. It appears that within a few years, Essington Lewis, chairman of BHP, purchased Yarrien for use as a private home and renamed the property Kooringa (GJM 2021:5).

In 1925 part of the Kooringa Estate, along with part of the adjacent Moorakyne Estate, was subdivided into 28 residential allotments with frontages to the east side of Wilks Avenue, Henderson Avenue and the corner of Beamsley Street (Figure 3). Hamilton Road was also created at this time and Kooringa mansion was retained on a reduced allotment on the north side of Hamilton Road (Figure 4). In 1942, when Essington Lewis still owned Kooringa, the mansion was occupied by Wesley College while the school's St Kilda Road buildings were taken over by the army (Figure 5). Later, Kooringa became the Lady Dugan Red Cross Home (GJM 2021:5).

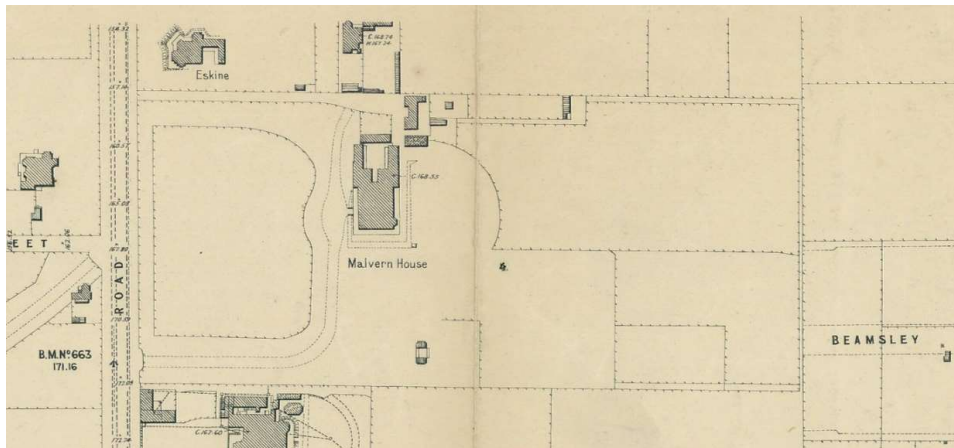


Figure 2. MMBW Plan No 59 showing Malvern House, 1902 (SLV)

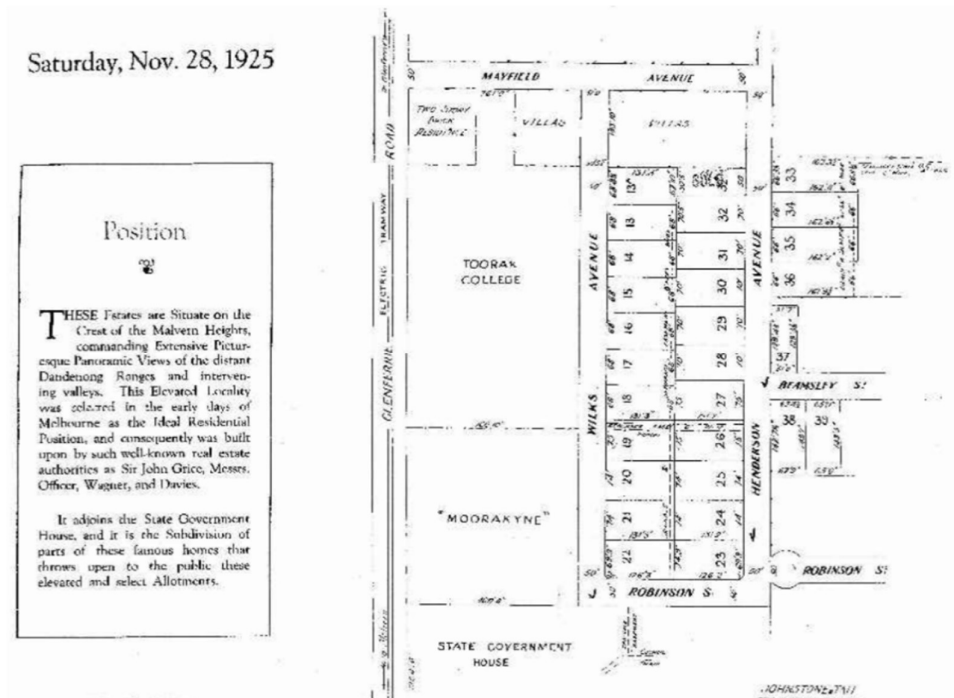


Figure 3. College & Moorakyne Heights Estate subdivision plan, dated 28 Nov 1925 (SHC, MH736).



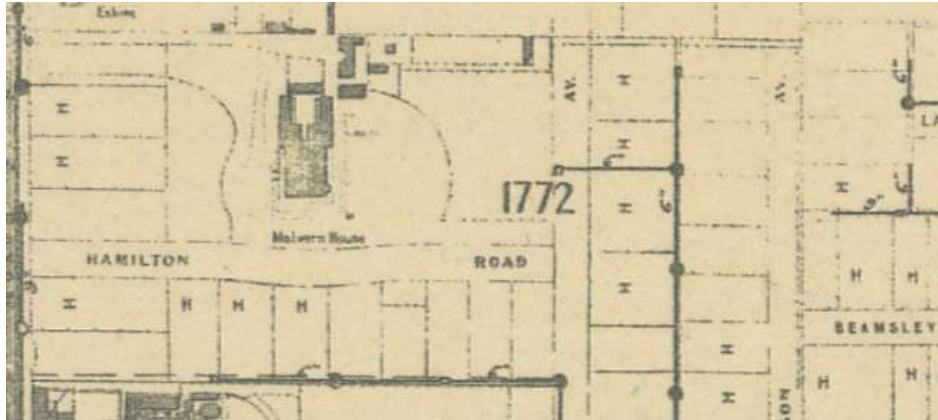


Figure 4. MMBW Plan No 59 showing the creation of Hamilton Road, c.1933 (SLV).



Figure 5. Aerial showing Malvern House/Kooringa, 1945 (Landata).

In 1975, the mansion site was purchased by home building company, Glenvill Homes, who commissioned prominent architectural firm, Bates Smart & McCutcheon to develop a concept for a cluster housing development on the site (Council Building Files). The project coincided with the introduction of the *Cluster Titles Act 1976*, which allowed for the creation of cluster subdivision, of which the large site on Hamilton Road was considered particularly suitable. In 1977, the original c.1885 mansion was demolished (Figure 6). Its original driveway alignment was retained to form Hamilton Close. A large number of original cyprus and oak trees from the original nineteenth century setting were also retained (Council Building Files). The new housing estate, named 'Hamilton Close', comprised 18 houses of either single, split-level or two storey design, each with private gardens and courtyards (see Figures 7-10). A large area, at the northern end of the development, was set aside for common grounds, and visitor car parking was introduced in various locations across the site (Council Building Files).

The Hamilton Close Cluster Housing development drew heavily on the design principles and concepts of Winter Park, a large cluster subdivision developed by influential project building company, Merchant Builders, in 1970. The central idea for the Winter Park project was the free siting of houses, private garden and communal open

space to achieve an integration of the built environment within the most efficient use of land (Victorian Heritage Database).

Marketed as 'Melbourne's most prestigious address', the first stage of the Hamilton Close development was opened for inspection in late 1978, with houses first offered for sale in 1979 (*Age*, 11 November 1978:41; *Age*, 7 April 1979:58). A 1978 feature in the *New Age Homes and Land* praised how the new estate 'successfully blended an established setting with a modern development' particularly given that, with the 'current interest in preserving many older homes of historical or architectural importance, the opportunity to indulge in such development is limited' (*Age*, 17 November 1978:30). Five years later, in 1983, Hamilton Close was described as 'one of the first cluster housing developments in Victoria and surely among the best' (*Age*, 29 January 1983:31). The final stages of the development were completed by the early 1980s (Malvern Valuation Field Card).

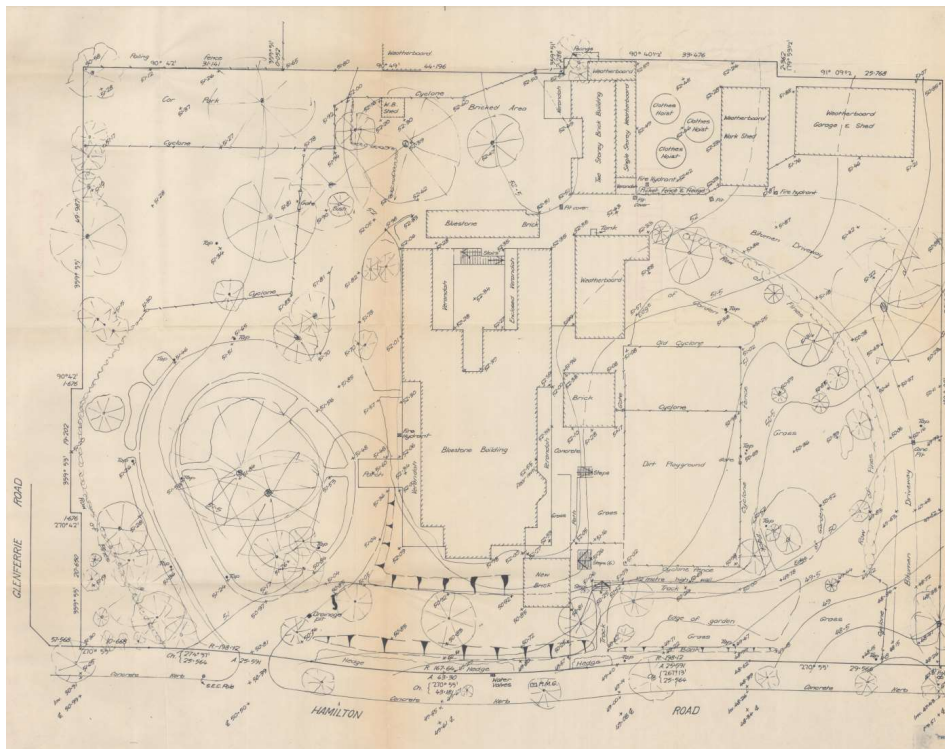


Figure 6. Site plan, 1976, prior to demolition of mansion and construction of cluster housing (Bates Smart & McCutcheon, Council Building Files)

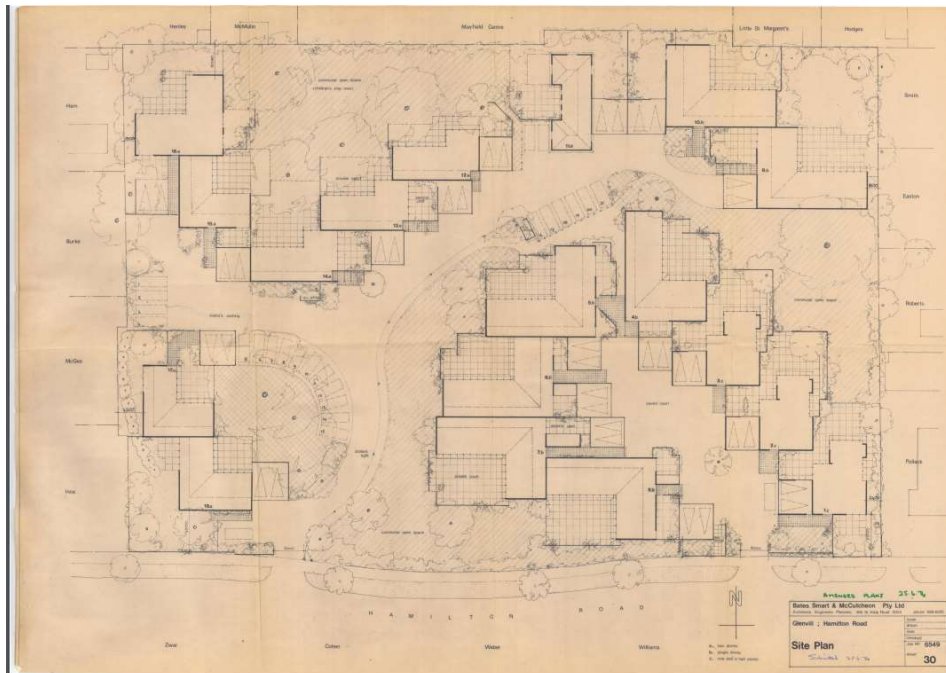


Figure 7. Proposed site plan of the new cluster housing development Hamilton Road, Malvern by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1976. Note this is not the final design (Council Building Files)

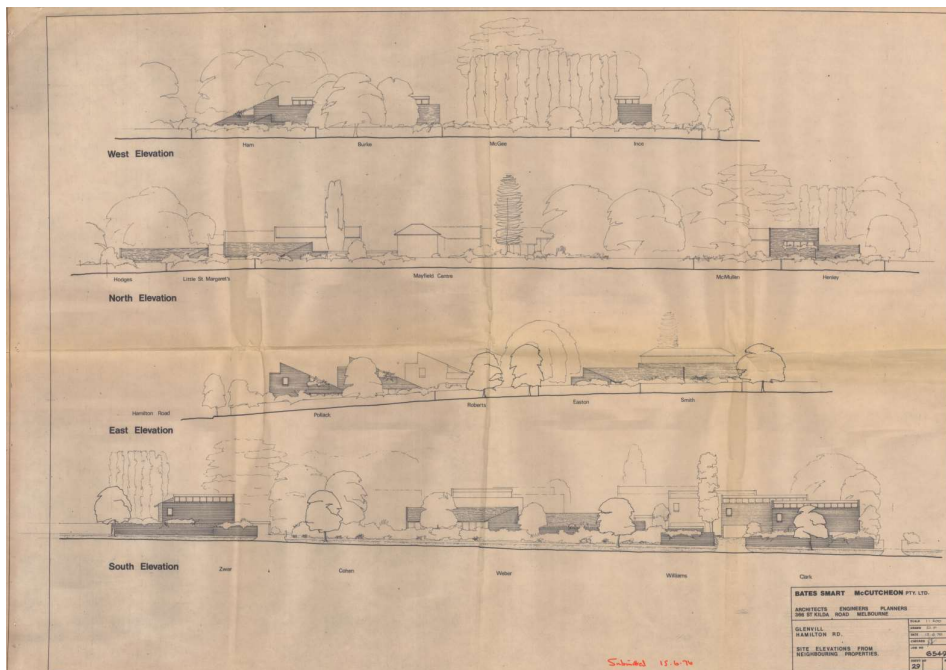


Figure 8. Proposed site elevations of the new cluster housing development at Hamilton Road, Malvern by Bates Smart & McCutcheon, 1976 (Council Building Files)





Figure 9. First house to be completed at Hamilton Close showing the private courtyard, 1978 (Age, 17 November 1978:30)

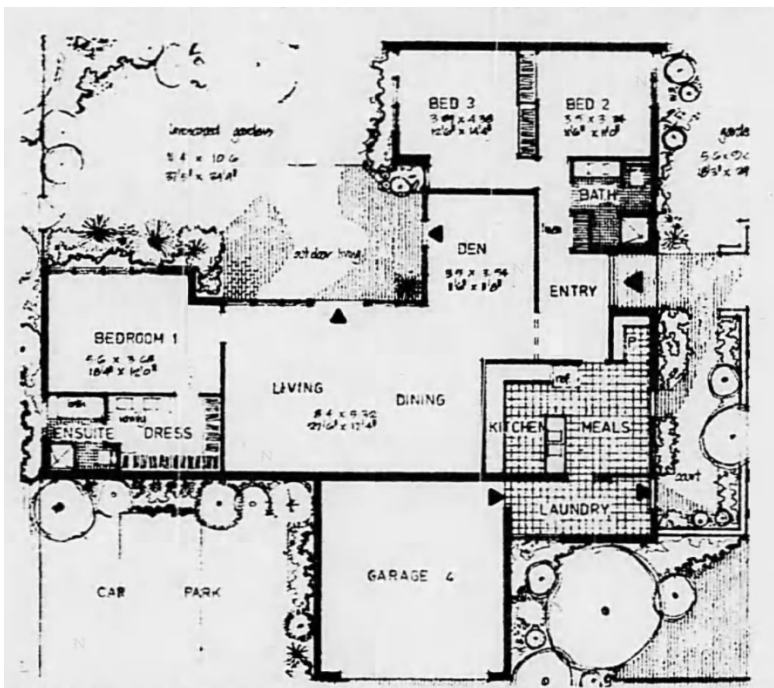


Figure 10. Site plan of the first house to be completed at Hamilton Close, 1978 (Age, 17 November 1978:30)

### ***Bates Smart & McCutcheon, architects***

Bates Smart & McCutcheon (BSM) was formed in 1926 when Osborn McCutcheon joined in partnership with E A Bates and C P Smart, expanding the existing practice of Bates & Smart. The firm was one of the oldest in Australia, having evolved from the original firm of Reed & Barnes (Goad 2012:72). By the late 1960s they were one of the largest practices in the country. The company continues to exist today as Bates Smart.

BSM has had an extensive history in residential, commercial, educational, hospital and ecclesiastical design (Goad 2012:72-3). In the 1930s, the firm designed a number of Georgian-inspired houses and country estates, while simultaneously winning RVIA Architectural Medals for the Commercial Palazzo-style AMP Building in Collins Street, Melbourne (1926-31) and the Moderne-style Buckley & Nunn Men's Store in Bourke Street (1933).

By the late 1950s BSM became Australia's leading experts in high-rise office building design, exemplified by their design for ICI House (now Orica Building) at 1 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne, which broke the CBD's existing 132-foot (40m) height limit in 1955-8 (Goad 2012:73). Other notable work undertaken by BSM during



this period included Wilson Hall, University of Melbourne (1952-6), and the planning and design of a number of school and university campuses, including Monash University and Peninsula Grammar School, Mount Eliza.

The firm continued to expand into the late-twentieth century, with the development of their expertise in the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and the introduction of new design directions through their designs for the late Brutalist Metropolitan Fire Brigade Headquarters, East Melbourne (1975-8) and Late Modern Budget Rent-a-Car building, North Melbourne (1980). Major projects undertaken by BSM in the latter half of the twentieth century included the large collaborative designs of Melbourne Central with Kisho Kurokawa (1983-92), Federation Square with Lab Architecture Studio (1997-2002), as well as the Crown Promenade, Southbank (2003) and Royal Children's Hospital, Parkville (2011) (Goad 2012:74).

## 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 Hamilton Close Cluster Housing comprises 18 semidetached dwellings located on a large rectangular site. The site has frontage and access from Hamilton Road to the south, with the north, east and west boundaries comprising the rear boundaries of neighbouring residences. Two crossovers to Hamilton Road provide vehicular access and a private roadway – 'Hamilton Close' – is accessed from the westernmost crossover and follows a curve to the north before branching out to the east and west in two arcs and terminating at cul-de-sacs. A second private roadway is accessed from the easternmost crossover and runs in a northerly direction until, where it would otherwise intersect with the eastern branch of Hamilton Close, it is truncated by a landscaped garden and narrowed to provide pedestrian access only. Both roadways are detailed with an asphalt carriageway and pale orange brick gutter and edge detail. Both entrances are marked with bronze plaques set into pale brown brick garden walls that announce the addresses of the dwellings accessible via each route. The roadways define the communal landscaped areas of the site as well as providing vehicular access to garages and visitor parking areas.

The dwellings are uniformly detailed, employing a consistent materials palette and design language. They comprise either one or two-storey buildings of pale brown brick masonry construction. The roof forms are of simple, yet expertly manipulated geometry. For example, buildings have either skillion roofs to ground-floor garages that mirror the planes of the gable roofs of the first-floor above, or two skillion roofs that are mirrored but offset to form a dramatic clerestory. Masonry walls, especially the wing walls, extend beyond the roof plane to form deep and often raked parapets, but never at the frontmost eave of the principal elevation of the dwelling as this would conceal the slope of the roof. All roofs, except where they have been re-clad, feature concrete tiles of uniform appearance. Other materials common between the dwellings include the garage doors, painted timber, such as to the fascia or to infill panels at the clerestory of some of the single-storey buildings, and door and window detailing (such as the fine metal security grilles to the front entries). All painted elements share a common colour scheme.

The dwellings are irregularly placed around the curving private roadways and do not form a consistent rhythm but nonetheless are clearly related to one another by their materiality and form. Each dwelling has an individualised identity of address through their siting, subtle differences in their scale, and by the front entry which is typically detailed through a change of ground treatment (from asphalt to brick paving) and tall garden walls or through the use of timber-framed arbours or small, carefully landscaped gardens featuring lava rock arrangements.

Each dwelling has its own private garden courtyard as well as the common landscaped garden. The common garden areas have a park-like appearance and feature areas of clipped lawn, several mature trees including *Cupresses* specimens, hedges and garden beds formed on organic curvilinear lines containing established plantings. Other landscape features include the bronze plaque wayfinding signage, green in-ground speed limit signs, and distinctive electric lanterns with brown glass orbs that are either set into the lawn or garden beds at a low height or mounted on garden walls.

Key Features:

- Careful siting of dwellings within a communal landscaped setting to maximise physical and visual access to open space while also providing each dwelling with privacy and access to natural light
- Universal design language to dwellings, including:
  - Low-profile one or two-storey forms
  - Common materiality, including pale brown face brick, painted timber details (for example to doors, gates and fascias), and consistent door and window detailing
  - Skillion and gable roofs with parapets and concrete roof tiles
- Private gardens and courtyards provided to each dwelling
- Substantial communal open space defined by an internal road network (that references the driveway of the earlier mansion located on the site) containing mature specimen trees, expanses of lawn, and densely planted garden beds. A consistent palette of material is applied to the communal open space, including asphalt roadways, red brick edging to internal roadways and garden beds, brick paving to individual unit entrances, and electric lanterns with brown glass orbs.

### Intactness/Integrity

The Hamilton Close Cluster Housing at 1 & 9 Hamilton Road retains a high degree of integrity in fabric, form and detail to its original period of construction. The property remains highly intact and retains its ability to be understood and appreciated as an example of a post-war cluster housing development.

### Comparative Analysis

The Hamilton Close Cluster Housing at 1 & 9 Hamilton Road is of note as a highly intact example of a post-war cluster housing development. Designed by prominent architectural practice, Bates Smart & McCutcheon for Glenvill Homes, it is one of a number of cluster housing developments that were designed and constructed across Victoria in the post-war period.

Cluster subdivision was promoted by influential project home building company, Merchant Builders as the free siting of individual houses, private gardens, public and communal open space, and public and private roads to make possible the most efficient use of land and to achieve the best possible relationships between buildings and open space (MSD 2015:131).

The first cluster type housing development in Victoria was Winter Park in Doncaster (VHR H1345), designed by architect Graeme Gunn for Merchant Builders. Developed in stages from 1970 to 1974, Winter Park comprised 20 detached houses sited around communal car and pedestrian access, with each dwelling being located on less than a quarter of an acre (Victorian Heritage Database). The clusters were set in a large communal park which retained its original eucalypts and sweeping rough cut grass. As described by Gunn:

*The concept of clustering not only achieved basic financial economies by grouping car access, parking, and the basic site servicing to dwellings, but also allocated open space more*

*effectively across the site. Greater privacy was made possible by better definition of space within and around the dwelling. This was achieved by careful co-ordination of dwelling orientation, landscaping, placement of carports, screens and communal car and pedestrian access zones. The space economy achieved by clustering dwellings permitted a large communal parkland shared by residents. The open space was immediately accessible to all dwellings, providing a safe, large, children's playspace which could be easily supervised from each house. The communal parkland was controlled and maintained by corporate ownership - including all residents in the development (Victorian Heritage Database).*

The development of Winter Park was integral to the introduction of the *Cluster Titles Act 1974*. Winter Park had been subdivided and developed under the *Strata Titles Act 1967*; legislation that made subdivision difficult because it required buildings to be connected, however arbitrary the links, and all buildings completed before any could be sold (Victorian Heritage Database). Cluster development was seen as a very important alternative to the existing housing patterns as it provided diversity of life-styles, variety in the suburban residential scene, flexibility, a more sensible utilisation of land, cost savings and the protection of natural assets. The new *Cluster Titles Act 1974* allowed for more flexibility in the development of this housing type and allowed developers to demonstrate the merits of their schemes, thereby reducing the requirement that a council defend a rigid set of standards. Despite these objectives and advantages, in the first three years after operation of the *Cluster Titles Act 1974* only 84 cluster subdivisions were registered. Despite amendments to the Act in 1976 and 1978, strata and conventional subdivisions remained the preferred choice to cluster subdivisions (Victorian Heritage Database).

No examples of cluster housing developments are included in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme. The Hamilton Close Cluster Housing subdivision is significant as the first cluster housing development in Malvern (and the City of Stonnington more broadly) following the introduction of the *Cluster Titles Act 1974*, and one of the first of its type in Victoria. Designed by prominent architectural firm, Bates Smart & McCutcheon, Hamilton Close demonstrates the typical characteristics of a cluster housing development, including careful siting of dwellings to ensure privacy and maximise open space, private gardens and courtyards, the provision of communal open space, respect for the natural characteristics and topography of the site, and the grouping of car parking and access.

There are no direct comparisons within the municipality.

### **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***

Hamilton Close Cluster Housing at 1 & 9 Hamilton Road has a clear association with the development of cluster housing in Victoria in the post-war period, which was a direct result of the *Cluster Titles Act 1974*. As the first cluster housing development in the municipality and one of the first of its type in Victoria, Hamilton Close Cluster Housing demonstrates the shift towards more affordable housing and higher density living which characterised suburban development throughout Melbourne in the late-twentieth century.

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

Hamilton Close Cluster Housing at 1 & 9 Hamilton Road is a fine and highly intact representative example of a post-war cluster housing development in the City of Stonnington. It displays typical features of the cluster housing typology, which developed across Victoria in the post-war period, including low-profile buildings built

to simple standardised designs with low-pitched roof forms, private gardens and courtyards, a neutral colour palette, the use of typical materials such as brick and timber, and the provision of communal open spaces and car parking and access.

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

Hamilton Close Cluster Housing at 1 & 9 Hamilton Road is a carefully designed and well-resolved example of a cluster housing development of the 1970s designed by prominent architectural firm, Bates Smart & McCutcheon. The housing development, which comprises a cluster of dwellings with private gardens and courtyards built to simple standardised designs, are sited to provide privacy and maximise open space, while also being set within a communal open landscaped setting. The effect is a picturesque composition of this housing type. The retention of the original nineteenth century driveway alignment and a number of nineteenth century Cypress and oak trees, contribute to the setting of the place.

**Grading and Recommendations**

It is recommended that the place be removed from HO182 and 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?	Yes – mature Cypress and Oak species in communal open space
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 11 below.



Figure 11. Recommended Extent of Heritage Overlay



## References

- B Raworth, *Moorakynne and Stonington Estates Citation*, 1998.
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