BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Glenferrie Road/High Street Precinct, Malvern (HO349)

Figure 1. Glenferrie Road (western side) (GJM Heritage, March 2021)

DATE: June 2021

Place type: Commercial Precinct	**Architect:** Various
Construction Date: Mid 1800s to c1945	**Builder:** Various

Historical Context Summary

The City of Stonnington stands on the Traditional Lands of the Woi wurrung and Boon Wurrung Peoples of the East Kulin Nations. Archaeologists believe that Aboriginal People have been in Victoria for more than 30,000 years. Throughout this long history their relationship with the landscape (where and how they live) has changed according to factors such as climate change, resource availability, and cultural change (Context 2006:10).

The first European settler in the Malvern district was John Gardiner in 1835, a pastoralist from New South Wales who was one of the first overlanders to Port Phillip. He pastured his stock near the junction of Gardiner's Creek and the Yarra River and is the namesake of Gardiner's Creek, Gardiner's Creek Road (now Toorak Road) and both the locality and the Shire of Gardiner (before they were re-named Malvern). The first recorded use of the name Malvern was in January 1854, when barrister Charles B. G. Skinner named his hotel on the corner of Malvern and Glenferrie roads the 'Malvern Hill' after a district in England. The name for the Shire of Malvern was derived from Malvern Hill Estate, a private subdivision in the area dating to 1856 (City of Stonnington [CoS]; Context 2006:34).

The first land sales in the area were held in 1854 and most original Crown grantees subdivided their allotments for resale (Context 2006:41; 2009:4). Gardiner's Road District was proclaimed in 1856 before Gardiner Shire was formed in 1871, which was renamed Malvern Shire in 1878 (CoS). The municipal boundary comprised the current localities of Malvern (previously Gardiner), Malvern East, Glen Iris (south of Gardiners Creek), Kooyong, Armadale (east of Kooyong Road), Toorak (east of Kooyong Road) and Chadstone (west of Warrigal Road). Early directories listed Malvern and Malvern East as the one locality, until 1910.

The former Malvern Shire saw slow population growth to 1881, by which time it totalled just under 2,000 people (Victorian Places). In 1879, the Oakleigh Railway Line was opened along the southern extent of the municipality, through Malvern, Armadale, Toorak and Hawksburn to join the existing line at South Yarra. The arrival of the Oakleigh railway coincided with the start of the land boom, which resulted in considerable urban growth. In the 1880s the district comprised substantial residences on large allotments, as well as pastoral and agricultural holdings (including market gardens and orchards) and commercial development (Context 2006:41, 65-6). During the 1880s boom period, the municipality saw a dramatic increase in population, quadrupling to approximately 8,000 by 1891, and steadily increasing to 10,000 by 1901 (Victorian Places). In the 1890s a number of timber houses were built in Malvern as an economy measure, but some residents complained that wooden houses would degenerate into slums. Concern about this development led to a slum abolition movement and subsequently, c1912, Malvern Council began to declare brick areas, where timber houses were not permitted. By 1916 the Council had also fixed a minimum area for individual housing allotments at 6000 square feet, with minimum frontages of fifty feet (Context 2006:128).

The railway line along the northern extent of the municipality was established in 1890 through the Glen Iris Valley from Burnley. Stations were established at Heyington, Kooyong, Tooronga, Gardiner, Glen Iris and Darling, however, expected residential development in their vicinity stalled during the 1890s following the economic collapse (Context 2006:66). The 1893 *Australian Handbook* (as cited in Victorian Places) described Malvern as 'an elevated residential suburb', served by a line of omnibuses from Prahran, with many leading merchants and professional men living in the area in pleasantly situated 'dwellings of a superior class'. The entry noted that a number of notable mansions had been erected by this date, and that the market gardens and orchards were 'steadily being reduced, and cut up into building allotments, on which [were] being erected

many handsome villas and business establishments' (Victorian Places). The municipality saw rapid development and urbanisation from 1900 and it was declared a Borough and then a Town in 1901. In 1911 the municipality was declared a City, with a residential population of 16,000 (Context 2006:86; Victorian Places).

The Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust was established in 1908, with electric tramlines opening along High Street in 1910-14, Glenferrie Road in 1910-13, to the south along Wattletree Road in 1910-12, and Malvern Road in 1915. The arrival of the tramlines further drove the development of commercial centres in the immediate vicinity and residential development beyond. New train stations were built at Armadale, Hawksburn, Malvern and Toorak between 1908 and 1918, and at Malvern East in 1929 (Context 2006:70-2, 113; Victorian Places).

Residential development during the early twentieth century generally occurred on newly subdivided estates or on nineteenth century subdivisions that had remained partly or wholly undeveloped during the 1890s depression (Context 2009:5). In 1912 it was reported that 800 houses a year were being built in the (by then) City of Malvern, which boasted 'a progress unprecedented by any other suburb' (Context 2009:128). In the decade between 1911 and 1921 the population in the City of Malvern doubled, from 16,000 to 32,000 residents, and then increased steadily to 43,000 by 1933 (Victorian Places). This population growth saw development spread to the Glen Iris Valley and the outer reaches of the City, in Malvern East. The housing stock in this eastern part of the municipality was more characteristically uniform and unadorned in comparison to housing in Malvern. Kooyong's development was substantially completed by the end of the 1920s (Context 2006:128, 131).

By 1946 the Australian Blue Book (as cited in Victorian Places) stated that Malvern was one of the 'leading residential suburbs of the Metropolis'. It comprised the substantial homes of many of Melbourne's leading citizens, in what was termed 'The Garden City' due to the number of parks and public gardens. Development in the City of Malvern steadied from the 1930s, with the population averaging 45,000 until the 1990s (Victorian Places). The City of Malvern amalgamated with the City of Prahran in 1994, to form the City of Stonnington.

Precinct History Summary

[The following history has been informed by Bryce Raworth's citation for Glenferrie Road/High Street Proposed Conservation Area, 1998, with additional information as cited].

The Glenferrie Road/High Street Precinct is the main commercial precinct in Malvern. It includes properties along Glenferrie Road from Dandenong Road to High Street, part of High Street west of Glenferrie Road, and a group of commercial premises near the Malvern Railway Station.

Prior to the first land sales in the area in 1840, pastoralists occupied what was to become the District of Gardiner. The first pastoralist was John Gardiner, after whom the district was named, who arrived in 1836. When the area was first surveyed it was divided into allotments suitable for gardens, orchards and farms. In 1856 the Gardiner Road District was proclaimed, extending from Gardiners Creek to Kooyong, Dandenong and Warrigal roads. Two of the main routes in the District would become Glenferrie Road and High Street.

The main Glenferrie Road section of the precinct, between Wattletree Road and High Street, was established on eight allotments which were first sold in 1854 as Crown Portions 31-34 and 45-48 in the Township of Gardiner, Parish of Prahran (*Figure 2*). The lots were sold to various settlers and speculators, including the Fulton Land Syndicate, which comprised Thomas Fulton as the principal of the syndicate, L MacKinnon and FJ Sargood, who purchased a number of the crown portions fronting Glenferrie Road. These lots were further subdivided into smaller lots and on-sold.
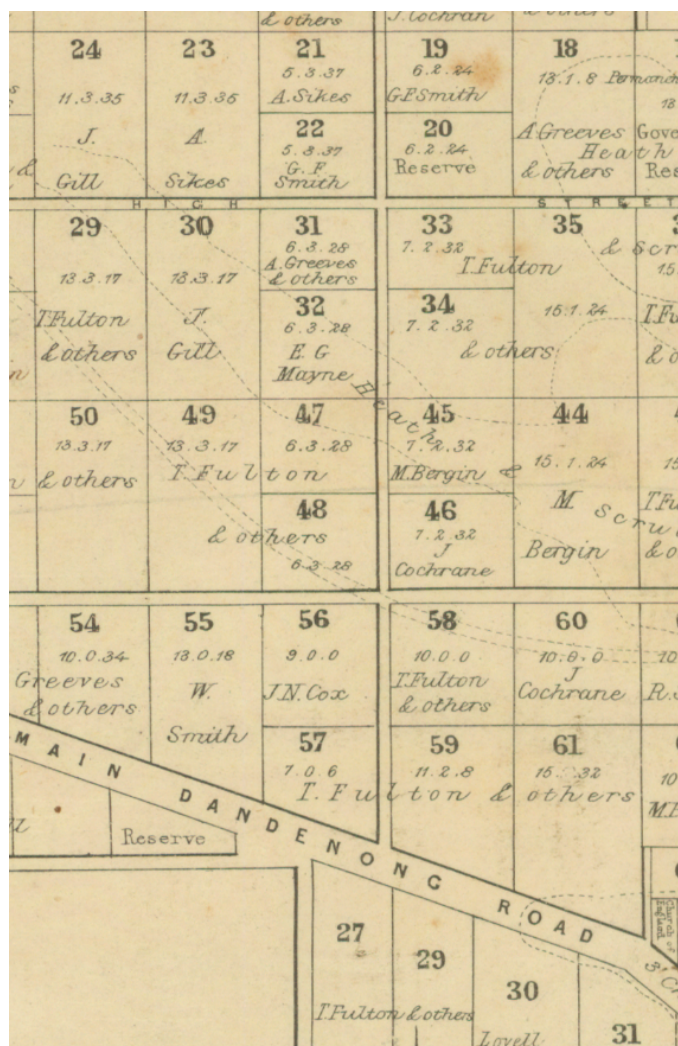
Figure 2. An 1857 'Plan of suburban allotments' in the Township of Gardiner, showing lots fronting Glenferrie Road and High Street (SLV, Filename dq006642).

It was originally proposed to name Glenferrie Road 'Sir Henry's Road', after Governor Sir Henry Barkly, but in 1857 the name Barkly Road was adopted. The name was changed to Glenferrie Road in 1872 after 'Glen Ferrie', a property owned by Peter Ferrie, one of Malvern's early land owners (Context 2009: 40, 59).

An early commercial development on what was to become Glenferrie Road was the substantial Railway Hotel, established as the Gardiner Hotel in the mid-1850s at the south-east corner of Glenferrie Road and Dandenong Road, which in 1862 boasted Victoria's first bowling green. Robert Alway built the first store in Glenferrie Road, on the south-west corner of Wattletree Road (dated as pre-1871). By 1856 only a handful of dwellings occupied Glenferrie Road. One residence was 'Coldblo' (1855), built for the Hon. Robert Sitwell near High Street.

The area attracted market gardeners and by 1865 William Chandler, known for his cauliflower production, owned land near the corner of Dandenong Road. Later, Edward Edsell, who would become Shire President, established a seed farm to the south of High Street, while the nursery of horticulturist Daniel Webley was established near Barkly Avenue (Williams Nursery later occupied this site). The rural character of Glenferrie Road was largely maintained through the 1860s and 1870s until the suburban railway line was extended through Malvern in 1879 (*Weekly Times*, 5 Apr 1879:16), connecting the suburban rail network with the country rail service to Gippsland. The railway, and associated station near the corner of Glenferrie and Dandenong Roads, provided a stimulus for commercial development in the adjacent Station Street and

Claremont Avenue (called Railway Road until 1907), and beyond to Glenferrie Road. This coincided with the suburban land boom of the 1880s, which resulted in the subdivision of some Glenferrie Road estates, with allotments offered for sale for commercial premises along the main road frontages, and for residences in the often newly established side streets.

From 1885, a civic centre for the Shire was developed on the corner of High Street and Glenferrie Road, on land that had been reserved for general municipal purposes in 1878. The civic centre comprised a Town Hall and Public Library complex (1885-1927), a Court House and Police Station (both 1886-87).

By the 1890s both Glenferrie Road and High Street, as well as Station Street and Claremont Avenue near Malvern Station, were well established commercial centres, containing a variety of retail premises. Buildings were predominantly two-storied, with the upper floor often serving as a residence, with many constructed as pairs or as groups of premises. Examples from this period of development include Pepperell's Buildings at 13-25 Glenferrie Road (1891); McAuley Building's at 50-58 Glenferrie Road (1890); buildings 69-83 Glenferrie Road and at 104-106 Glenferrie Road (1888); Dixon's Buildings at 255-263 Glenferrie Road (1889); buildings at 1206-1210 High Street (1891); and individual buildings such as H G Appleford Printer, 109 Glenferrie Road (1891) and the building at 115 Glenferrie Road.

However, the 1880s boom years came to an end, and with the severe economic depression of the 1890s many companies, building societies and banks went into liquidation. Development in the area slowed and land often remained vacant in this decade.

At the close of the nineteenth century unoccupied allotments remained throughout the precinct (see Figure 3), however with the gradual improvement in the economy, commercial premises were eventually built on the undeveloped land. By 1910 the commercial precinct had developed into one of Melbourne's foremost shopping strips (*Prahran Telegraph*, 4 June 1910:6). Buildings from this period include Turner's Buildings at 60-64 Glenferrie Road (1904), the Art Nouveau inspired premises at 97-103 Glenferrie Road (1902),14 Glenferrie Road & 1-11 Station Street, and the Fire Station in Willis Street (1906).
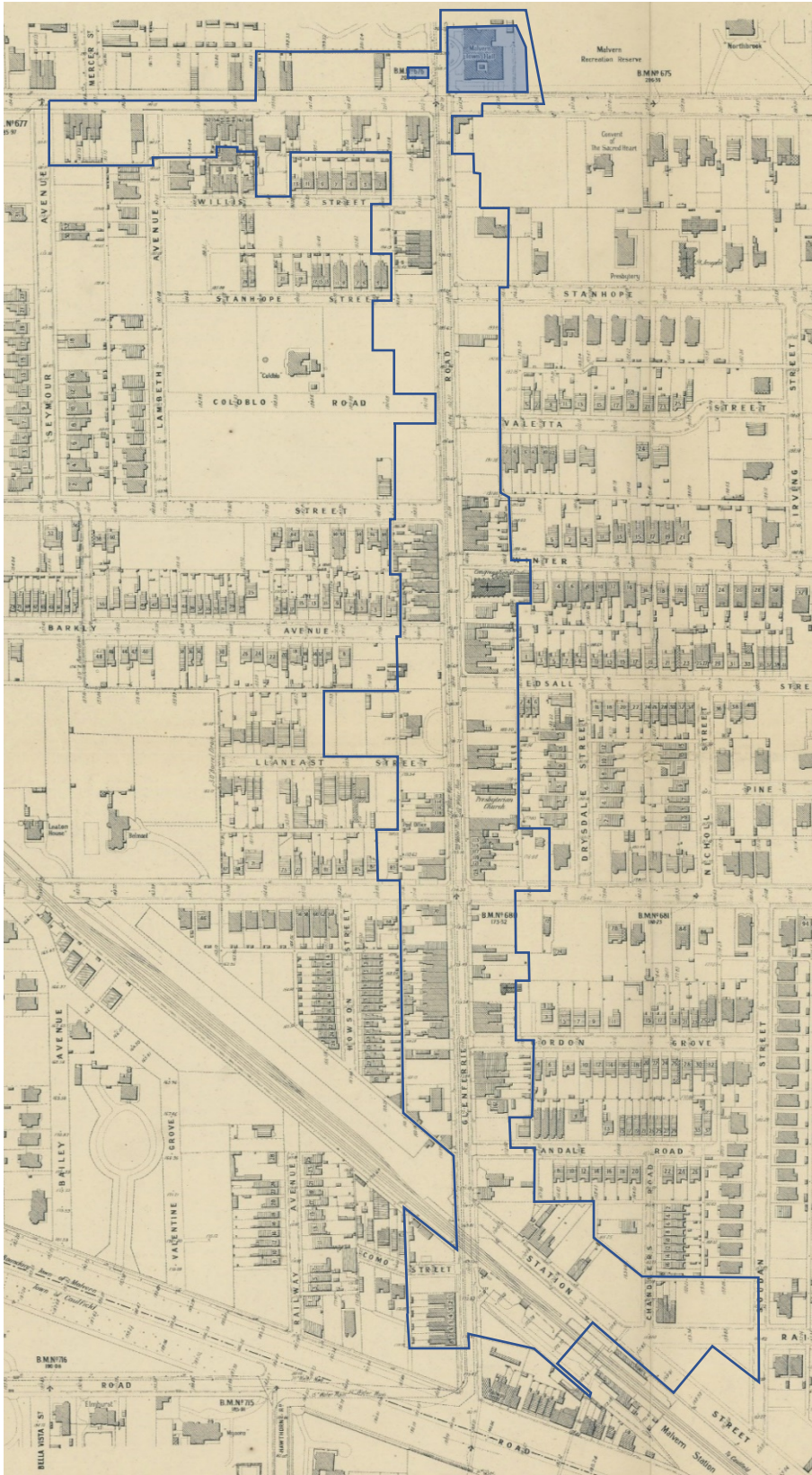
Figure 3. The precinct (approximate boundary in blue) in 1901, extending from Dandenong Road at the south to High Street at the north (MMBW Plan No. 61, dated 1901).

The Coldblo Estate subdivision on the west side of Glenferrie Road was initially advertised for sale as a residential and commercial subdivision in 1892 (Figure 4), however, the frontages to Glenferrie Road remained undeveloped into the early twentieth century due to the economic depression of the 1890s.
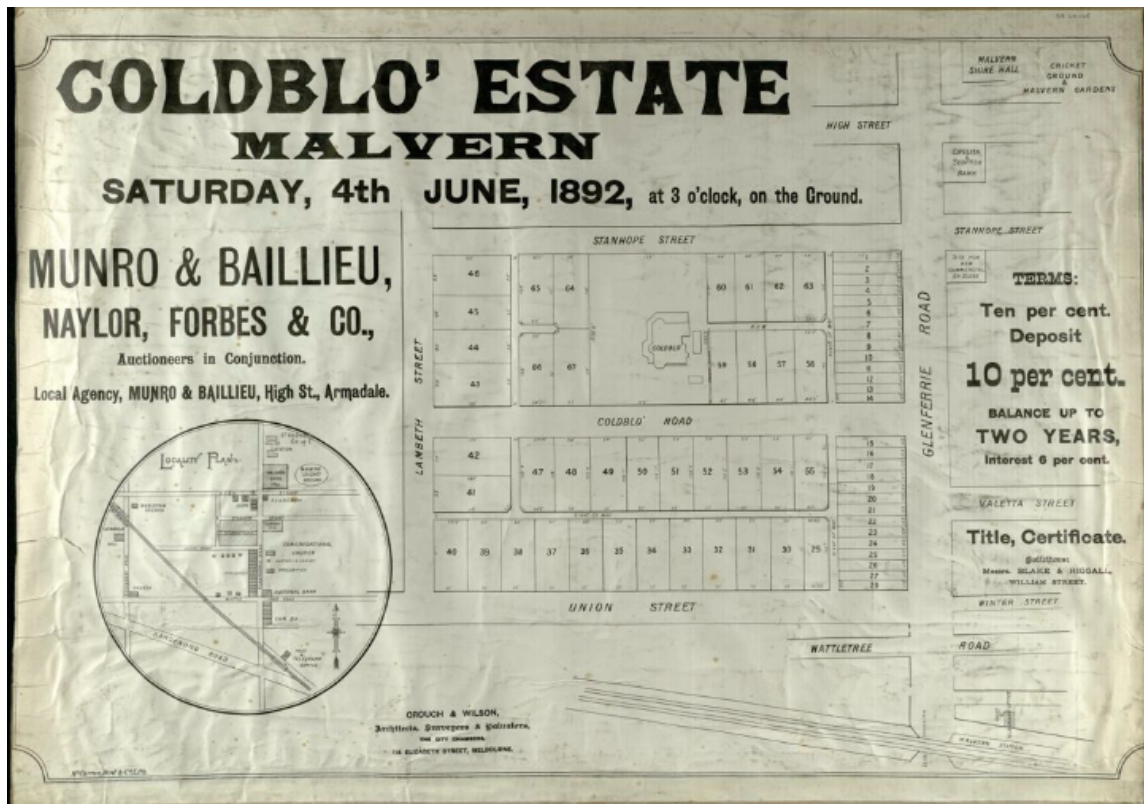

Figure 4. Auction Notice for the Coldblo Estate, Malvern, dated 1892, prior to the development of the Malvern Tram Depot on Coldblo Road (SLV, Filename ha000093).

Coldblo House and Estate was subsequently acquired by the Prahran & Malvern Municipal Tramways Trust and a tram depot was established on the site in 1910 (VHR H0910). An extensive tram network was developed in the area from 1909, including a route along Glenferrie Road, from Dandenong Road to the High Street intersection, then west along High Street to Armadale Railway Station. This provided further impetus for development of the Glenferrie Road/High Street commercial centre and any remaining vacant land on the main roads was filled over the next few years. Buildings from this period include the corner premises at 197-201 Glenferrie Road (1914), the former National Bank at 84 Glenferrie Road (1914) and the former post office and telegraph exchange, Llaneast Street (1919).

As a result of the growth in the area, Malvern was proclaimed a City in 1911.

The precinct continued to develop in the Interwar period, at which time Glenferrie Road became known for its banks, real estate agents and theatres. The only theatre to remain today is the Victory Picture Theatre (1920) which has been converted to retail premises at 133 Wattletree Road. A Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) plan shows the commercial streets densely developed in the late 1940s (Figure 5). The precinct remained one of Melbourne's major commercial centres through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.
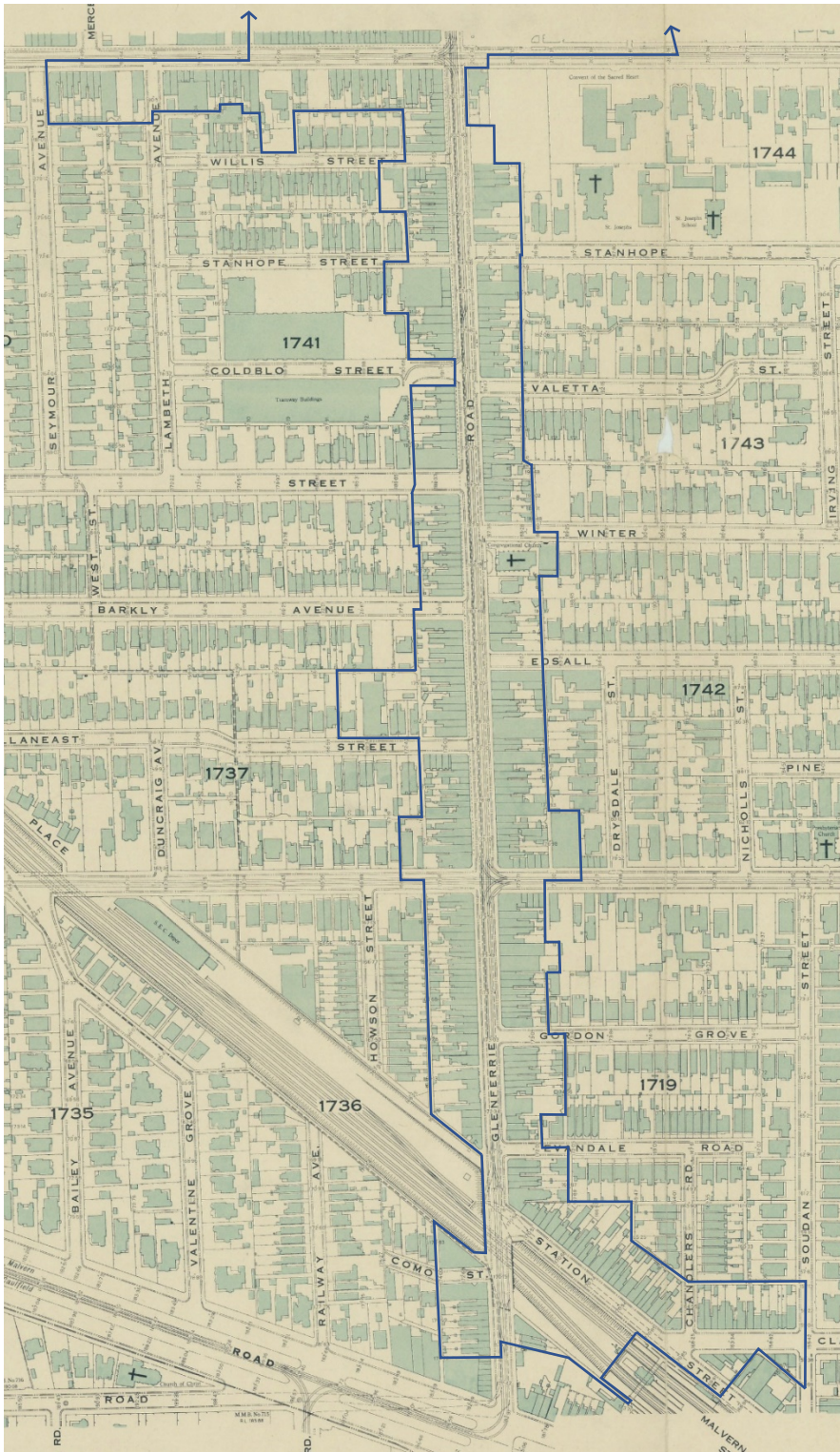
Figure 4. The dense development of the precinct (approximate boundary in blue) by 1948 (MMBW Plan No. 61, dated 1948).

Description Summary

The Glenferrie Road/High Street Precinct includes properties on both sides of Glenferrie Road from High Street in the north to Dandenong Road in the south, sections of both sides of High Street to the west of Glenferrie Road, commercial properties in Station Street and Claremont Avenue, and a small number of properties located on side streets off Glenferrie Road.

The precinct comprises commercial premises predominantly from the Victorian and Federation periods of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The precinct also includes two public buildings – the Fire Station, Willis Street (1906) and Post Office and Telegraph Exchange, Llaneast Street (1919) – the Glenferrie Road railway bridge, a number of banks from various periods, and the Former Victory Picture Theatre (1920) which has been converted to retail premises at 133 Wattletree Road. A number of Interwar commercial premises are also included within the precinct.

Buildings that do not contribute to the significance of the precinct include those constructed in the post-war period onwards (from c1945). Recent additions and alterations (excluding conservation works) to heritage buildings are also not contributory.

A number of places with individual Heritage Overlays are located at or near the boundaries of the precinct and these places support the significance of the precinct. These include:

- Malvern Railway Station, 2 Station Street, Malvern (HO103) (VHR H1575)

- Former Railway Hotel, 641-651 Dandenong Road, Malvern (HO403)

- Former ES&A Bank, 1284-1286 High Street (HO58) (VHR H1691)

- June Moon (Sculpture), Glenferrie Road/High Street corner (HO42)

- Malvern Town Hall, 1251 Hight Street, Malvern (HO483)

- Malvern Tram Depot, Coldblo Road (HO23) (VHR H0910)

St Paul's Anglican Church, Dandenong Road (HO14 Glen Eira Planning Scheme, Caulfield North Estate & Environs, Caulfield North), is also prominently located to the south of the precinct.

Key Features

- Highly intact late nineteenth/early twentieth century precinct

- Consistent two-storey scale with some single-storey buildings

- Predominantly late Victorian and Federation period commercial buildings, with some Interwar commercial buildings

- A large portion of buildings of high architectural quality

- A variety of both simple and highly decorative façade parapets, with pitched roofs behind

- No front or side setbacks

- Face red brick (including polychrome) or rendered walls

- Rendered window surrounds and sills to upper storeys

- Rendered ornament to upper storeys, including name plates

- Corner towers

- Rendered or tile-clad bracketed hoods to upper storey windows

- Rendered or face brickwork chimneys

- Strong horizontal lines formed by parapets, cornices, string courses

- Repetitive upper floor fenestration patterns

- Less than 40% of the upper street façade comprising openings such as windows

- Corrugated iron roof cladding dominant

- Upper-level verandahs for residential use

- Original or early shop fronts with display windows, timber or tiled plinths, and entry recesses

- Splayed corners to buildings at intersections

- Some intact rear wings

- Remnant original or early painted signage

- The Glenferrie Road railway bridge (steel framed bridge with red brick abutments with stone capping)

- Bluestone service laneways to the rear of Glenferrie Road and High Street shops

- Remnant bluestone kerb and guttering in some east-west streets

- Views to key landmarks at the northern and southern ends of the precinct (being the Malvern Town Hall to the north and St Paul's Anglican Church to the south).

Figure 6. Western side of Glenferrie Road, north of Wattletree Road

Figure 7. Pepperell's Building, 13-25 Glenferrie Road

References

Auction Notice for the Coldblo Estate, Malvern, dated 1892.

Context, *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History*, 2006, 2009 addendum.

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

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Plan No 61, Malvern, dated 1901 & 1948.

Prahran Telegraph.

Raworth, Bryce, *Glenferrie Road/High Street Proposed Conservation Area*, 1997.

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Weekly Times.