

Stokell, 51 Adelaide Street

- 1889: Building in progress, Malvern road, corner of Adelaide Street with 325 foot side frontage (Malvern Rate Books); Stephen Armstrong, owner and builder, named after wife's maiden name; other buildings constructed by the Stephen Armstrong Building Company were Stonnington, Cliveden Mansions, the Ball and Welch store and iceworks for W. Woodmason at Oakleigh and Malvern
- 1894: Brick house 15 rooms
- 1905: Stephen Armstrong owner, 150 foot frontage to Malvern Road, 18 rooms, James Ormond merchant occupier
- c.1910: MMBW Detail Plan 1761 shows large gates, sweeping drive from Malvern Road, separate service entry from Adelaide Street, stables and other outbuildings
- 1911: Armstrong sold house, 58 Malvern Road, to Mrs L.G.Laycock
- 1914: Mrs Mary Winter-Irving owner and occupier
- 1917: now 40 Malvern Road
- 1923: Charles de Plan Lloyd, broker, owner and occupier, 18 rooms, 160 by 520 foot, now named Ambo
- 1938: 45 Adelaide Street, St Ronan's Rest Home, Dougald McCormick
- 1941: 51 Adelaide Street
- 1949: St Ronan's Rest home
- 1970: St Ronan's Private Hospital
- 1990: Hospital closed
- (MMBW plans, Malvern Rate Books, Sands and McDougall Directories, compiled Malvern Historical Society Inc.; this house is also illustrated in a painting by William Tibbits)

A large Victorian-era conservative stuccoed Italianate mansion, it has a prominent arcaded verandah on two sides between projecting bay windows and a hipped slate roof with imposing chimneys. Details include bracketted eaves, architraves and impost mouldings, Corinthian capitals and balcony balustrades. The building is generally intact although its land holding has been dramatically reduced and it has lost the frontage to Malvern Road. The external painting of cement render and sundry minor modifications for institutional purposes have reduced the impact of this otherwise imposing mansion.



Stokell is representative of many large Italianate mansions of the 1880s, with a return arcade and projecting window bays, although of a grander scale than most surviving examples. The original external wash house survives. Miles Lewis has suggested, but has not been able to substantiate, that the arches look like the work of John Beswicke/Beswicke and Cooté and can be compared with their Kawarau, Cato Street, Hawthorn (now Stephanie's Restaurant) and 3 Molesworth Street, Kew. (1) Beswicke is well known for his nearby Malvern Town Hall. The association with a prominent builder, Stephen Armstrong, whose company built two of Melbourne's most notable mansions, Stonnington and Clivedon Mansions, is reflected by the elaborate nature of this house. Builders' houses of the nineteenth century often were enriched by the nature of the projects which they had undertaken. Subsequent occupiers and owners of 51 Adelaide Street included Mary Winter Irving, a member of the prominent Western District grazing family. The building became a private hospital in 1938 until its closure in 1990. This building is able to demonstrate the wealth of leading building contractors of the 1880s. Externally its grand scale remains although its impact is much reduced by the sub division of the land around, especially the front garden.

Stokell, 51 Adelaide Street, Armadale constructed in 1889 by prominent builder Stephen Armstrong is of state significance:

- for its association with a major prominent building contractor (who constructed Stonnington, Clivedon Mansions, Ball & Welsh and Woodmason's Iceworks in Malvern and Oakleigh) and its ability to demonstrate the workmanship and the elaborate detailing of this builder's other projects;
- for its Italianate design with prominent external massing, arcaded verandah, projecting bays, intact decorative stucco, chimneys and fenestration.

1 Correspondence to Malvern Historical society Inc, 18 August 1992