

'AVOCA' RESIDENCE AND COACH HOUSE
8 Gordon Grove and 103 Caroline Street, South Yarra



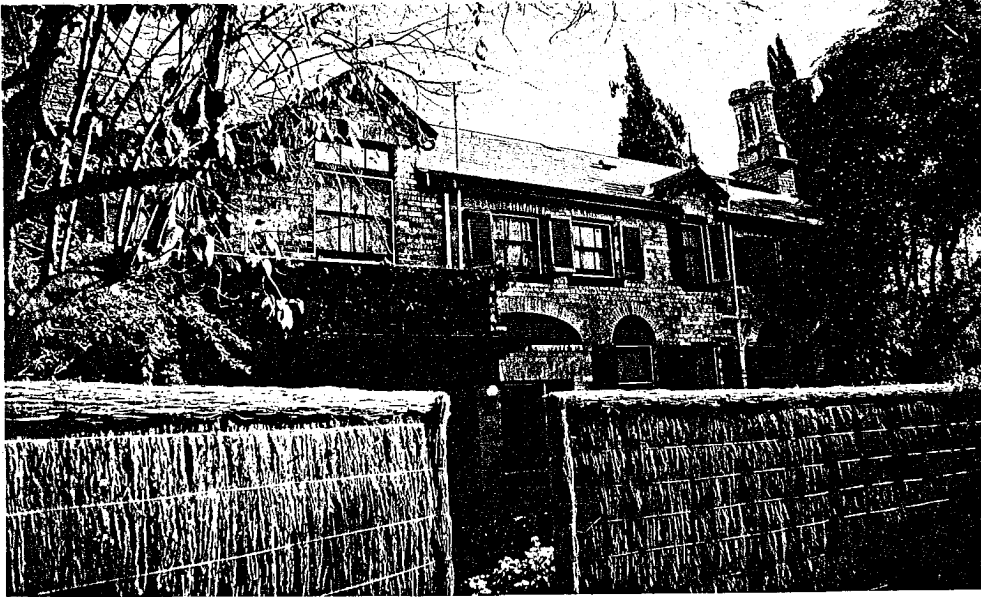
Recommendations It is recommended that these buildings be added to the Register of Historic Buildings, retained on the Register of the National Estate and be protected using the provisions of Clause 8 of the Town and Country Planning Act (Third Schedule).

Current Assessments 'Avoca' is included on the Register of the National Estate and classified by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

History and Description 'Avoca' now at 8 Gordon Grove, South Yarra, was erected c. 1848 on a large suburban allotment fronting the River Yarra near the Punt Road crossing place. The single storey cream brick house with slate roof, ornate timber gable boards, wide decorated timber verandah and prominent chimney pots, was erected for William Montgomerie Bell and is an outstanding elaborate picturesque gothic revival design of unknown origin.

The 'Avoca' Coach House and stables were added to the c.1850 homestead by 1858, for the renowned pastoralist William Bell. They are constructed from hand made English-sized bricks (possibly a 'Clagmannon 1845' manufacture) and possess typical scalloped bargeboards often seen in 19th century stable buildings. Although they have been added to extensively, probably during George Kirk's ownership, and altered in the 1930s by the Alsop family, (architect Mr Bramwell-Smith), the original character has been maintained.

Significance 'Avoca' is of architectural importance as a rare surviving example of the picturesque Gothic revival mode in Melbourne and is a notable translation of contemporary British traditions to the Australian context. The finely crafted building is of historic importance as one of the first houses in the South Yarra district erected for little known, but influential, W. M. Bell, a pioneer councillor, merchant and the fifth Mayor of Melbourne. The original allotment included possibly the first vineyard south of the Yarra. The adjoining stables are also of



architectural significance and an important adjunct to the main house.

Intactness 'Avoca' survives in an intact condition and the exterior, save for recent sympathetic additions, is of high integrity. The interior has been modified and redecorated, but the essential details and qualities remain unaltered. The stables have been renovated in a sympathetic manner.

References

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