

Former Stables

28 Northcote Road, Armadale



Heritage Assessment

September 2011

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This report was commissioned by the City of Stonnington. It provides an assessment of the cultural heritage significance of the former stables at the rear of 28 Northcote Road, Armadale, and provides comment on the appropriateness of a heritage overlay control.

The analysis below draws upon an external inspection of the building and historical research using the Stonnington Local History Catalogue and MMBW plans. The report also relies on secondary historical sources including the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006).



Figure 1 Map showing the location of 28 Northcote Road Armadale. Source: Land Victoria Interactive Maps.

3.0 Listings and Controls

City of Stonnington

The property at 28 Northcote Road, Armadale is included in the Armadale precinct heritage overlay (HO130). The residence on this site was identified as an A1 grade building in the *Prahran Conservation Study* (Nigel Lewis and Associates, 1983). The stables are not mentioned in the citation for the residence and do not have an individual grading.

Heritage Victoria

The site is not included on the Victorian Heritage Register.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

The site has not been classified by the National Trust.

Australian Heritage Council

The site is not included on the Register of the National Estate as administered by the Australian Heritage Council.

4.0 History

Contextual History

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, horses were essential for transport of people and goods as well as providing the horsepower for much other heavy work. Households and businesses relied on the horse and cart for deliveries of milk, meat and other necessities. The ownership of a horse drawn carriage was a particularly good indication of a person's wealth and status. Carriage houses and stables associated with the large houses and mansions of the wealthy were often elaborate masonry structures, second only in architectural importance to the main residence itself. Horses were valuable animals, and were generally well cared for, and their stables were usually well-constructed and maintained. Stables were generally of two storeys, with the horse stalls on the ground floor and a hay loft above, with access via large openings in the walls and with chutes conveying the feed to the feed bins in the stalls below.

Although motorised vehicles began to replace horses in the early twentieth century, this was a gradual rather than an abrupt transition. Horses were used for waste collection and earth moving by some Council after World War II, and the horse drawn milk cart persisted into the 1960s.

28 Northcote Road, Armadale

The residence at 28 Northcote Road, Armadale appears to have been erected c1888 with the contractor John Carter being the original owner and occupier.¹ An MMBW plan of 1900 shows an outbuilding in the north-east corner of site marked 'S' (this being the standard form of notation for stables on the MMBW plans) (see figure 2 below). The location of the stables, and its building footprint, corresponds to an existing gable roofed outbuilding on the site.

¹ Nigel Lewis and Associates, *Prahran Conservation Study*, Section 11-13.

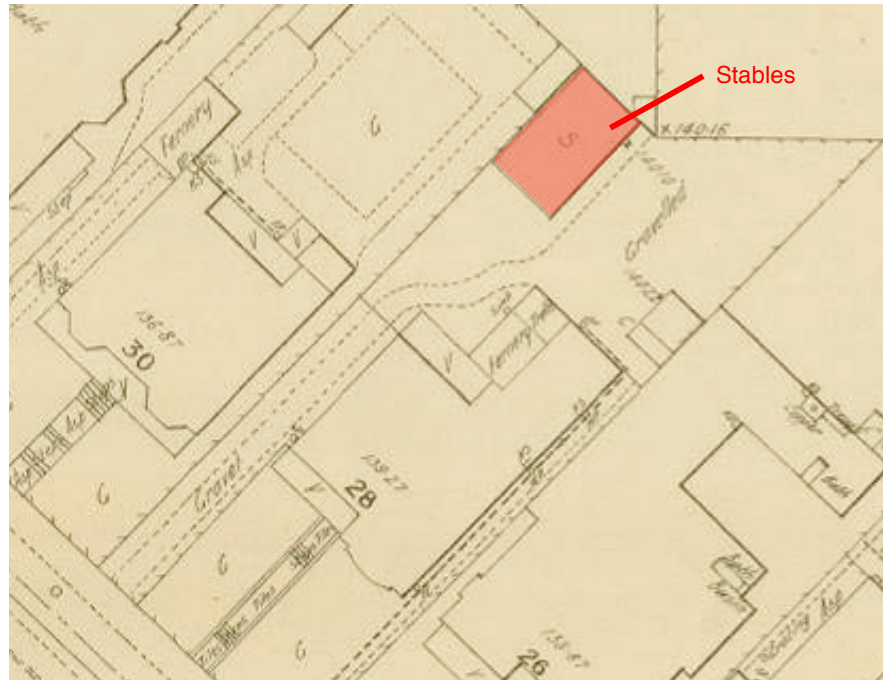


Figure 2 Part of a 1902 MMBW Detail Plan showing the stables at the rear of the site. Source: State Library of Victoria.

5.0 Description

The stables at 28 Northcote Road, Armadale, are located in the north-east corner of the rear yard. The associated residence is a single storey Victorian Italianate timber villa. The residence remains highly intact externally and displays finely detailed timberwork.



Figure 3 The stables at 28 Northcote Road, Armadale.

The stables is a simply detailed double-storey, timber-framed building with weatherboard walls and a gabled corrugated iron roof. The garden elevation retains the original hay loft door under a central gablet. There are multi-pane, timber-framed, double-hung sash windows on the ground and first floors. A single-storey gable roofed structure abutting the east side of the stables was presumably the carriage house. The arched dentillated frieze on its gable end appears to be a latter addition.

The stables remain substantially intact externally but are in a somewhat dilapidated condition. The interior has been stripped of most early stables fittings and fixtures.

6.0 Comparative Analysis

Structures associated with horse transport were once extremely common, but are becoming increasingly rare in metropolitan Melbourne. A municipal wide survey of stables that was undertaken as part of stage 1 of the *Stonnington Stables and Dairies in the City of Stonnington Heritage Project* (John Statham Urban Conservation, 2011), and further refined during stage 2 investigations (Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, May 2011), suggests that approximately 16 domestic stables survive in varying degrees of intactness. Only a small number of these are currently protected by a heritage overlay control. These were generally built on a grand scale to serve nineteenth century mansion estates, and include stables at Mandeville Hall (HO80), Stonington (HO40), Northbrook (HO59) and Avoca (within the Alexandra Avenue precinct, HO122). Stables associated with the former Eilyer mansion are also protected by a heritage overlay (HO241), but this building was substantially altered when it was converted into a residence in the twentieth century.

More modest stables associated with closer middle and upper middle class suburban development in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century are not as well represented on the Stonnington heritage overlay schedule. Such stables were typically double-storey brick or timber buildings with the horse stalls on the ground floor and a hay loft above. Stylistically, relatively simple picturesque Gothick designs with gable roofs were favoured for stables, even though the associated house was more often than not built in an entirely different Victorian Italianate style.

Examples of this type of stable can be found at the rear of 14 Sorrett Avenue, Malvern, 1A Hawksburn Road, South Yarra, 28 Northcote Road, Armadale and 64 Rose Street, Armadale. The 14 Sorrett Avenue stables stand out amongst this group because of they display a higher standard of design and a relatively high degree of integrity (see figure 4 below). The stables at 28 Northcote Road are more simply detailed but compare favourably in terms of intactness. As such, it can be considered as a good representative example of a small late-nineteenth century domestic stables.



Figure 4 Stables at the rear 14 Sorrett Avenue, Malvern.

7.0 Significance

The former stables at 28 Northcote Road, Armadale are historically and architecturally significant at a local level as a very rare and largely intact example of a nineteenth century stables in Stonnington.

The residence at 28 Northcote Road is presently graded A1. The current assessment finds that the stables demonstrate significance at an A2 level.

8.0 Thematic Environmental History

The former stables at 28 Northcote Road, Armadale, illustrate the theme '4.3.2 Changing Modes of Transport – from horses to motor vehicles', as explained in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006).

9.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that former stables at 28 Northcote Road, Armadale be retained in the schedule of the Heritage Overlay as part of the Armadale Precinct. External paint controls, tree controls and internal alteration controls are not recommended for the stables. The stables should be listed in the schedule to the heritage overlay under 'Outbuildings or fences which are not exempt under Clause 43.01-4'. The same approach should be adopted for the stables located in the same HO at the rear of 64 Rose Street.

Additionally, the stables at 28 Northcote Road and 64 Rose Street should be mentioned in the precinct statement of significance at such time when the citation for the Armadale area is updated and revised.

10.0 References

Context Pty Ltd, *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History*, 2006.

MMBW Plan of Drainage No. 134745. Yarra Valley Water.

MMBW Detail Plan No.1760. State Library of Victoria map collection.

Stonnington Local History Catalogue, Reg. No. 13825.

