

INDIVIDUAL HERITAGE PLACE – CITATION

HO275

NAME OF PLACE: Chesterfield

OTHER NAMES OF PLACE: Syme house.

ADDRESS / LOCATION: 6 Mayfield Avenue, Malvern

PROPERTY INFORMATION: part of the Great Toorak Estate in Crown Portion 24.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local (potential State)¹.

ASSESSED BY: Graeme Butler, Francine Gilfedder.

ASSESSMENT DATE: March 2002

REVISED ASSESSMENT October 2003

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (as visible from the street)

Chesterfield at 6 Mayfield Avenue, Malvern is of Local (potential State) significance architecturally:
- as a near externally near original and successful early design in the Queen Anne revival manner, judged within the State context (Criterion E1).

¹ Graeme Butler & Associates believes the house to be of potential State significance but no state-wide comparative analysis has been done.

PLAN

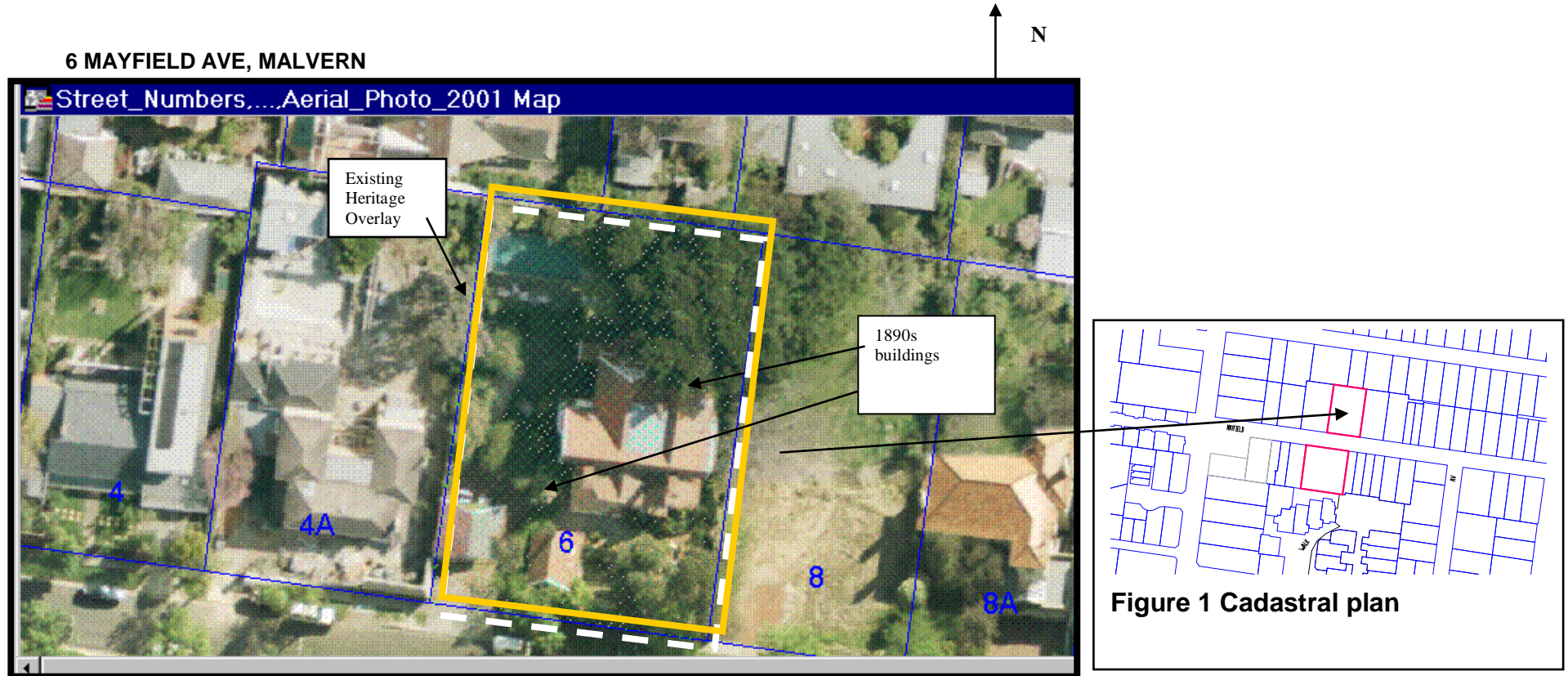
NAME: Chesterfield

OTHER NAMES:

ADDRESS / LOCATION: 6 Mayfield Avenue, Malvern

Not to Scale²

6 MAYFIELD AVE, MALVERN



² Aerial view supplied by the City of Stonnington

PHOTO:



Figure 1 (Source: Graeme Butler & Associates)

DESCRIPTION:

(as assessed from the street)

The 1891 perspective of the house shows a red brick Queen Anne revival two storey house with prominent half-timbered gables, slate roof and tall chimneys, with multiple stacks. The gable ends were jettied out on ornamental timber brackets, windows were typically grouped and some set in faceted or semi-circular bays at ground level, allowing for open balconies at the upper level.

The 1902 MMBW plan shows the house named Chesterfield, close to Mayfield Avenue and facing to the north and east, with stables and other outbuildings set within fenced service yards along Mayfield Ave. The house has a cellar in the south-east wing and upstairs plumbing. To the north, west and east were the grounds, allowing for extensive gardens on the Chesterfield Avenue frontage and a tennis court on the east boundary at Mayfield Ave. The house plan has steps leading up from the west garden, a projecting room bay on the west and north and window bays on the east and south-east. The entry porch is at the north east corner.

The existing house shows some differences in execution: it has Marseilles pattern terra-cotta tiles instead of slates, the multiple chimney shafts are suggested by cement ribs rather than expressed, and at least one open balcony has been roofed in an ornamental manner similar to the rest of the design. The main elevation is however obscured from the street view.

(inspection required)

Interior

Not inspected.

Condition & integrity

(as assessed from the street)

Generally externally original except for details such as the presumed missing terra-cotta finials to the gables. The land with some significant trees has been subdivided to form a new lot on the east. A brick garage has been added in place of the stable facing Mayfield Ave.

Context

Set on rising ground and opposite the basalt remnant of the earlier house on the estate, Rosehill, to the south.

HISTORY

Historical background

From Malvern A Physical History
(Georgina Whitehead in Appendix A, Malvern Urban Character Study)

Successive Subdivisions

The 1880's (in Malvern) were characterised by booming land prices and a rapid expansion in the subdivision and sale of land, particularly for the affluent middle classes { Garden: 214-215}. During this period there was resurgence of the sentimental cult of Home { Davison: 137}. Home was a refuge from the world of commerce and industry and provided rest and revitalization. While only the very wealthy could possess both a town house and a country house, the suburbs were seen as combining the advantages of country and city life. A house and garden in the suburbs became a goal for many people. The suburban garden soothed the overwrought businessman, but fast efficient transport was needed to speed him back to the city to earn the living which supported his return to nature. The inhabitants of the village of Malvern had the choice of either walking, riding or travelling the five miles to Melbourne by horse drawn vehicle, all of which were slow.

In 1879 a much faster option was provided when a railway line was opened to connect Oakleigh Station, where the Gippsland train terminated, with South Yarra Station, through which the Melbourne to Brighton line passed. Caulfield, Malvern and Armadale Stations were built along the new train route and land in their vicinity was sought after. By the close of the 1880's the village for Malvern had disappeared and the suburb of Malvern had taken its place.

Most of the new development occurred to the west of Burke Road. The wealthy built large houses set in extensive grounds on the highest land. The mansions of Whernside, Flete, Moorakyne and Stonington were situated in the north west of Malvern, an extension of Toorak which had always been a prestigious address. Stonington, built on land that had previously been a market garden, was later used as the official residence of the Victorian Governor between 1901 and 1927 while Government House was occupied by the Governor General of Australia { Cooper: 186}.

... Malvern had little to offer in the way of employment and the relatively high cost of train travel to the industrial suburbs prevented Malvern from developing large areas of working class accommodation. The majority of dwellings were staunchly middle class with a frontage to the street of at least 50 feet.

Malvern had confidence in the future; plans were drawn up for an imposing Town Hall to be built on the reserve at the corner of Glenferrie Road and High Street. Alfred Deakin, then Minister for Public Works, laid the foundation stone in 1885. As well as municipal offices the complex incorporated a court house, post office and library { Cooper: 149-151}. The prominence of the site near the crest of the hill added to the town hall's consequence and, from the vantage of the tower, fine views were had over much of the municipality...

However, the impact of the economic, technological and cultural forces that had transformed Malvern from a village to a suburb in less than a decade, ceased with the end of the boom in 1888. Economic depression followed during the 1890s and land awaiting subdivision and sale reverted to agricultural use { Garden: 215}.

...The Glen Iris railway along Gardiner's Creek Valley was opened in 1890, after the collapse of the boom. There were so few people living adjacent to the more easterly stations that the section of line between Darling and Oakleigh Stations was closed in 1895 { Priestley: 152}. The Outer Circle railway between Hughesdale and Fairfield so lacked patronage that the entire line was closed in 1891 after operating for less than two years { Priestley: 152}.

Specific History

(see Foster 1999)

1850

In 1850 Robert Balbirnie subdivided Crown Portion 24 into seven large allotments. One 20-acre allotment at the corner of Glenferrie Road and Toorak Road, was sold to Isabella Cunningham in 1850, then to Albert Proudfoot in 1853.

1856

The land was purchased by commission agent, William Philpott and his wife Rosetta Wilhelmina Rucker and became the site of Philpott's estate 'Rosehill'. The Malvern rate book of 1856, describes a 'brick house in erection' and the following year William Philpott is described as the owner and occupier of a brick house of nine rooms, out-houses and a gardener's house of two rooms.

1880

Thomas Cumming, a squatter, purchased Rosehill, then described as an '8 room brick house, with kitchen, offices, stables, coach house, brick and stone out-house, shrubbery and pasture'.

1888

In 1888 Rosehill was purchased by Walter Lewis, solicitor and later Mayor of Malvern (1904-5, 1909-10) - he demolished Rosehill and subdivided the property into 108 allotments, known as 'The Great Toorak Estate'. At this time Chesterfield Avenue and Mayfield Avenue were created. Lewis built his own house Erskine on lot 9, in Glenferrie Road at the corner of Mayfield Avenue.

The plan of subdivision of 'The Great Toorak Estate' was arranged to enable a gentleman to purchase a large piece - four blocks for argument's sake ... two facing Chesterfield Avenue South, and the two immediately behind facing Mayfield Avenue. ... purchasers of the Chesterfield Avenue frontages will have the option of taking the lot behind facing Mayfield Avenue.

1891

Arthur E. Wallis, an accountant with the Bank of Victoria, took up the option offered by the vendors, for in 1891 he owned five allotments (lots 55,57,59,61 and 63), between Mayfield Avenue and Chesterfield Avenue. Architect Phillip E. Treeby designed a two storey brick house facing Chesterfield Avenue and in 1891 the 'Building, Engineering & Mining Journal' featured an illustration of Wallis' new house. The 10 roomed brick house was built in 1891 by builders Boxshall & Leonard, close to Mayfield Avenue. As a result of the effects of the 1890s bank crashes, ownership of the property was transferred to Mrs Mary Wallis.

1892

Rate books list Wallis as owner of brick house and land 255'x280'

1902

The 1902 MMBW plan shows the house named Chesterfield, close to Mayfield Avenue and facing to the north east, with stables and other outbuildings on the Mayfield Ave street-line. This allowed for extensive gardens on the Chesterfield Avenue frontage and a tennis court on the east boundary. At this time, Chesterfield was only one of four houses in the Great Toorak Estate - the others being Nurton built in 1898 for architect Guyon Purchas in Toorak Road, Erskine, the home of Walter Lewis in Glenferrie Road, and in Mayfield Avenue opposite Chesterfield, Robert Christian's two-storey house, built in 1892. Christian's house was built to the west of the bluestone chapel - a remnant from the Rosehill estate.

1902 - 1904

Manufacturer, Henry Andrews leased Chesterfield from Mrs Mary Wallis. (Henry and Nellie Andrews then moved into Grosvenor, the mansion home opposite in Glenferrie Road, that Nellie inherited from her father George Meares).

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1905

National Bank manager, John Gillespie was Chesterfield's next tenant before he purchased the property in 1905 in the name of his wife, Mrs Agnes Gillespie.

1915

John and Agnes Gillespie lived at Chesterfield until 1921, although merchant, Henry Masterton leased the house in 1915.

1922

Malvern's rate books state that Mrs Mabel Syme purchased Chesterfield from the Misses Hamilton, although other rate entries indicate the Hamilton sisters were tenants, not owners. (Isabel, Robina and Barbara Hamilton had purchased Yarrien, the Creswick mansion to the south of 'Chesterfield', in 1918. At that time Isabel was Principal, Robina a teacher and Barbara was superintendent of the boarding house, at Toorak College in Douglas Street Toorak. In 1919 the school relocated to Yarrien in Glenferrie Road, which was used to accommodate the boarders and as the private quarters of the Hamilton sisters. The Hamilton sisters may have used Chesterfield as temporary accommodation while Yarrien was undergoing alterations.)


1923-4

By 1924 Mrs Mabel Syme had moved into Chesterfield with her husband, George Adlington Syme, the same year he was knighted. George Adlington Syme, son of George Alexander Syme and nephew of David and Ebenezer Syme founders of 'The Age', had commenced his eminent medical career as Resident Medical Officer at the Melbourne Hospital. Following training in London, George Syme was appointed Demonstrator and Examiner at Melbourne University (1887). In the same period he was Pathologist to the Women's Hospital, editor of the 'Australian Medical Journal' and an Honorary Surgeon at the Melbourne Hospital. Numerous official posts followed, including President of the Australasian Medical Congress and the first President and Director-General of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. .

Land surrounding 'Chesterfield' was sold and in 1923-4, and the house rated in Mayfield Avenue the following year, with only a 10 foot right-of-way in Chesterfield Avenue.

1929

Five years after moving to Chesterfield, Sir George Syme died. Lady Mabel Syme lived in the house until her death two years later. Her son, George Robin Adlington Syme (1902-1975) who was also a distinguished surgeon, lived on at Mayfield. He had married Meredith Sutton in 1929 { WWA 1950: 688}. The Syme family have retained ownership of Chesterfield.



ANALYSIS

Thematic context

The Principal Australian Historic Themes (PAHT) have been developed by the Australian Heritage Commission to allow assessment of historical significance within a national historical thematic framework.

PAHT	Subtheme	Category
Building settlements, towns and cities	Making suburbs	House & garden, urban

Comparative analysis

Queen Anne revival

The Queen Anne revival was halted in Victoria by the Great Depression of the 1890s with some landmark residential examples evident today such as;

Queen Bess Row, East Melbourne (Tappin Gilbert & Dennehy, 1887)

Woodlands, Essendon (Oakden Addison & Kemp, 1888)

Many more examples were created after the Depression, being in the late 1890s early 1900s: such as Dalswaith, Kew (Ussher & Kemp, 1900). Beverley Ussher designed a number of houses with Old English or Medieval precedents during the late 1890s. Most were: red brick, had projecting gabled roof bays, terra-cotta or slate roofs, one or two storey, multi-bayed and picturesque in composition. Another example is the Gables, 15 Finch St, Malvern c1900 designed by Wilson.

The house in Mayfield Avenue is early for the style and still well preserved externally.

Treeby

The architect Phillip Treeby (1860-) worked in the period 1880s-1890s, mainly in Melbourne and inner suburbs, doing houses and commercial work.

The following are examples of his work:

1891, Dandenong Rd (cnr Alma Rds, or vicinity of present Bella Vista St), Caulfield, Melway 59 A10 -B10;
1891, Goombah Coombah [MMBW], 186 Church St, 186 [se cnr Halifax St], Brighton, Melway 67 D11 -76 F1;

1891, Cotswold 40 Berry St, East Melbourne, 2G F6;

1890-1c, Norwood [MMBW] Esplanade [orig Beach Rd, east side, Norwood Av now through here. MMBW ref] Brighton, Melway 76 D1;

1889, Ardrinane Ardrinane, 18 Mercer Rd, (near NE cnr Myamin St. MMBW Armadale, Melway 59 B7;

1889, Invermay Llanos, 18 Stanley St, [SW cnr Hampton St. MMBW ref] Brighton, Melway 67 G11;

1888, Bayview St [south side], Northcote, Melway 30 F10;

1886, Church St Brighton, Melway 67 D11 -70 F1;

1886c, Hartsyde Marama, 161 Church St, (north side), Brighton, Melway 67 D11 -70 F1;

Assessment against the criteria adopted by the Australian Heritage Commission

Summary of Australian Heritage Commission criteria

Code	Summary	Assessment at local significance	Assessment at contributory significance
E.1	Aesthetic importance to the community or a cultural group	near externally original and successful early design in the Queen Anne revival manner, judged within the State context	
H.1	Association with important person or group		the home of Sir George Adlington Syme and his family, Syme being a distinguished medical practitioner and recognised as such in the `Australian Dictionary of Biography' ³

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The house and land should remain a heritage overlay in the Stonnington Planning Scheme.

Proposed extent of heritage place in the heritage overlay

The house and land with emphasis on external fabric from its construction in the 1890s.

Planning Scheme Protection in a heritage overlay: Recommended

Other heritage registers

Heritage Victoria Register: Recommended*

Register of the National Estate: Recommended

REFERENCES

Lewis & Aitken 1992 cite:

`Building and Engineering Journal' May 9, 1891, described as 'House at Toorak for A E Wallis Esq. Phillip E Treeby Architect 421 Collins St. Boxshall & Leonard Builders;
Malvern Historical Society Inc photographs (2)

Foster, 1999 cites:

`Australian Dictionary of Biography', vol. 12.

Bower, Rob, 'Malvern, a history of the subdivision, 1840-1989' plan 2, unpublished manuscript, Malvern Archives.

³ The Panel discounted the association with the two prominent Syme family members: Graeme Butler & Associates maintains that this association is locally significant

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'Building, Engineering & Mining Journal', 9 May, 1891.

City of Malvern rate books:

City of Malvern rate book, North ward, 1903-4, no. 108; 1904-5.

City of Malvern rate book, North ward, 1915-16, no. 111; 1920-21, no. 264.

City of Malvern sales register.

Jackson, Anne, 'Mayfield Centre; A Short History', (unpublished 1988), Malvern Archives.

Malvern building plan 1612.

MMBW (detail) plan, 1902.

Miles Lewis Melbourne Mansions Database (in progress 1999).

MMBW (detail?) plan, 1902.

Schumer, Leslie, 'Malvern pioneers' unpublished manuscript, 1979, Malvern Archives.

Shire of Malvern rate books:

Shire of Malvern rate book, Western riding, 1891, nos. 125-129.

Shire of Malvern rate book, Western riding, 1892, no. 123; Building, Engineering & Mining Journal, 9 May, 1891, p.179.

Shire of Malvern rate book, Western riding, 1899-1900, no. 194.

Subdivision and sale notice, 'The Great Toorak Estate', 1888, Malvern Archives.

Town of Malvern rate books:

Town of Malvern rate book, North ward, 1902-3, no. 111.

Further references

Foster, Diane. 1999. Melbourne's most fashionable suburb, A history of Toorak, east of Kooyong Road 1840-1998, Master of Arts in Public History, Department of History, Monash University

Lewis, M 1977. Architectural Survey final report

Macbeth 1998 'Death Index Victoria...'

Tibbits, G 1982. "The So-called Melbourne Domestic Queen Anne" in 'Historic Environment' V2, number 2: 4

City of Stonnington Tree Record (n.d.)

'Who's Who in Australia' 1950, 1976.

Further work

Survey Treeby Architects index entries

Appendix 1 Previous citation

Council has considered a series of amendments to the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme. During the exhibition period of former Amendments L47 and L61 objections to the inclusion of some properties in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay were received. Therefore Council resolved to undertake further analysis of the heritage citations of affected properties prior to holding an independent panel hearing. The amendments are now known as C5 and C6(2) respectively.

The following citation was exhibited with the heritage planning scheme amendment L47.

Architect: Phillip E Treeby

1891: Illustration appeared in 'The Building And Engineering Journal', described as 'House at Toorak for A E Wallis Esq. Phillip E Treeby Architect 421 Collins St. Boxshall & Leonard Builders (May 9, 1891)

1891: 'Building, Engineering and Mining Journal', 9 May 1891, p.179 - Philip E Treeby, 421 Collins St. House at Toorak for A E Wallis, Esq. now nearing completion. Perspective (Architects Index)

1902: 40' to the inch plan of 'Chesterfield' (MMBW Drainage Plan 17V) shows the residence facing Chesterfield Avenue on the equivalent of twelve small allotments, with the service wing and outbuildings facing Mayfield Avenue.

1947: Syme, George Robin Adlington. Hon Libr. Roy. A'Asian Coll. of Surg.

1950: Syme, GR, Surgeon Roy. Melb. Hosp. (Who's Who)

A two storey Queen Anne style house, designed after the manner of the architects, Ussher & Kemp, with typical steeply-pitched Marseilles tiled roofs, outrigger half-timbered gable ends, red brick walls, and turned timber verandah posts. The building is dominated by the bright orange unglazed terracotta tiles with terracotta ridging and massive slender chimneys with rendered strap work. The top panel of the verandah has a small geometric grid pattern in timber and a deep beam beneath. There is a giant arch extending through this grid on the north elevation, formerly of a more detailed design. [1] Atypical elements include the west elevation's stepped label -cum-string mould and centred multi-pane six-light casement window. The window has a pattern on the side reminiscent of the balcony detail. 6 Mayfield Avenue also has an extended kitchen wing at the rear which has an open latticed section facing the street and a secondary chimney. The building is essentially intact seen from the street although there are numerous minor alterations to some details. Now closed-in, virtually on all sides, by later (related) additions and (unrelated) new development hard on the east (once main elevation), the house's architectural qualities are hard to perceive. Mature trees survive from the garden, including a Morton Bay Fig, Hoop pine, Monterey Cypress and 'Cordyline australis'. Refer to Appendix One for biographical details of architect.

Chesterfield is of state significance as an accomplished as an early Queen Anne design. The unusual detailing and strong building and roof forms contribute to the pioneering character of this residence.

1 Two early photographs held by Malvern Historical Society Inc.

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