

## 1310 HIGH STREET, 'Wynduk', MALVERN

### History

*'Wynduk', 1310 High Street was built in 1891 for Samuel Bloomfield on Crown Portion 33. The house was briefly occupied by Benjamin Fink, former MLA for Maryborough, 'considered the greatest suburban and city landboomer in Australian history' shortly after the collapse of his financial empire.*

1854

Crown Portion 33, consisting of more than 7 acres of land at the corner of present day Glenferrie Road and High Street, was sold at the Crown land sales in February 1854. Most of the land in Glenferrie Road, between Dandenong Road and High Street, including Portion 33, was sold to the Fulton Land Syndicate, comprising Thomas Fulton, L. MacKinnon & F.J. Sargood.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Fulton, the principal of the syndicate, started the first iron foundry and engineering shop in Melbourne.<sup>2</sup> Within four months, Portion 33 was sold to Mark Addison, who sold it to William Myers the same year.<sup>3</sup>

1879

When the first train ran through Malvern Station in 1879, Malvern's rural atmosphere changed. This new method of transport to the previously isolated district coincided with the boom years of the 1880s, resulting in a surge of development in both commercial and residential areas. It appears that by 1882, Charles R. Martin, Chairman of the Land Credit Bank had purchased Portion 33, for in that year he brought the land under the Transfer of Land Act.<sup>4</sup>

1885

Around 1885, on his land at the corner of Glenferrie Road, Martin built 'Clifton' a two-storey brick house facing High Street. In 1886 the completion of the Malvern Shire Hall on the corner opposite, was an indication of the district's prosperity and the following year, development sites for commercial use resulted from the subdivision of Hayward's Estate on the prominent south east corner of High Street.<sup>5</sup>

1888

In 1888 'a substantial brick building' was erected by the E.S. & A. Bank opposite the Shire Hall.<sup>6</sup> The same year, Donald Munro, partner of William Baillieu and son of landboomer and Premier, James Munro, built 'Northbrook' the substantial Italianate style

<sup>1</sup> Rob Bower, 'Malvern 1840-1989, A History of the Subdivision', plan set 4 unpublished manuscript, Malvern Archives.

<sup>2</sup> J.B. Cooper, *History of Malvern*, (Melbourne 1935), p.65.

<sup>3</sup> Bower.

<sup>4</sup> Bower.

<sup>5</sup> Sale notice and plan of subdivision, Hayward's Corner, c.1887, Malvern Archives.

<sup>6</sup> Condition of sale in Certificate of Title. E.S. & A. Bank 1885, ANZ Bank Archive.

villa in High Street. By this time a number of large single storey villas were under construction opposite 'Northbrook', to the east of Martin's house in High Street.

1890

In 1890 merchant Samuel Bloomfield, owned land adjacent to Martin's house.<sup>7</sup>

1891

A brick house of 8 rooms had been built for Bloomfield.<sup>8</sup>

1895

By 1895, the Land Credit Bank, of which Bloomfield's neighbour, Charles Martin was Chairman, was in financial difficulties. When the bank went into liquidation, 'Clifton' became the property of the Vincentian Fathers.

Unlike his neighbour, Samuel Bloomfield survived the economic crisis and retained ownership of 'Wynduk', where he lived until after the turn of the century. For a brief period in the however, barrister William Clarke, occupied the house, then landboomer Benjamin Fink. Benjamin Fink, former MLA for Maryborough, was considered not only 'a financial genius who rose from poverty to the control of millions' but 'the greatest suburban and city landboomer in Australian history'.<sup>9</sup> One of Fink's best known buildings, 'The Block', was Melbourne's leading shopping arcade of the day.<sup>10</sup> It is known that when the landboom collapsed, Fink made a 'secret composition' with his creditors in 1892, and fled the country.<sup>11</sup> In 1895, however, Benjamin Fink is rated as the occupier of Bloomfield's House in High Street.<sup>12</sup>

1897

The Sisters of the Sacred Heart established a school at 'Clifton' which was handed over to the Brigidine Sisters in 1916. The school gradually expanded to become Kildara Convent.

1902

The 1902 MMBW shows 'Wynduk' at the end of the row of six villas facing High Street. William Dickenson occupied 'Wynduk' from 1903 and Henry Jarrett, from 1905.<sup>13</sup> The

<sup>7</sup> Shire of Malvern rate book Western Riding 1890, no. 786.

<sup>8</sup> Shire of Malvern rate book Western Riding 1892, no. 910.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Cannon *The Land Boomers*, Melbourne, 1976, pp. 4 & 34.

<sup>10</sup> *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 4, p. 168.

<sup>11</sup> *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 4, p. 168.

<sup>12</sup> Shire of Malvern rate book Western Riding 1895, no. 737.

<sup>13</sup> *Sands & McDougall's Directory*.

property was then purchased by Miss Mary Skene and occupied by George Skene from 1908, Thomas Burton from 1909 and Douglas Hatton from 1911.<sup>14</sup>

1914

In 1914 Miss Alice Scott purchased the property from Mary Skene.<sup>15</sup> J.A. Scott, surgeon, then Brenda Scott, physician, occupied the house for over fifty years. Photographs from the Scott family show the house at this period. 'Wynduk' and the row of houses to the east of it were prominently shown in a photographic view taken from the tower of the town hall. [Attachment 3]

1956

Between 1956 and 1970, all the houses to the east of 'Wynduk' were sold to the De La Salle Brothers and eventually demolished. 'Wynduk' was sold to the Brigidine Property Association in 1967.

1978

Council records indicate that, alterations and additions were undertaken to the rear of the building at 1310 High Street in that year.

*History prepared by Di Foster, Malvern Archives*

## REFERENCES:

*Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 4.

Bower, Rob, 'Malvern 1840-1989, A History of the Subdivision', plan set 4 (unpublished manuscript), Malvern Archives.

Cannon, Michael, *The Land Boomers*, Thomas Nelson, Melbourne, 1976.

Certificate of Title. E.S. & A. Bank 1885, ANZ Bank Archive.

City of Malvern rate books.

Cooper, John Butler, *The History of Malvern from its First Settlement to a City*, Specialty Press, Melbourne, 1935.

*Sands & McDougall's Directory*.

Shire of Malvern rate books

Town of Malvern rate books.

## Description

'Wynduk' is an imposing single storey late Italianate villa. The street elevation is dominated by the two projecting semi-octagonal bays and the verandah which returns on both sides of the house, for the main two rooms. The verandah is an elaborate cast iron

<sup>14</sup> Town of Malvern rate book Central Ward 1909, no. 4161.

<sup>15</sup> City of Malvern rate book Central Ward 1914-15, no. 1914-15.

bull-nose design, characteristic of the later Victorian period. The building has a slate hipped roof and stuccoed chimneys with heavy cornices. The walls are stuccoed with paired eave brackets separated by garlands. The windows are set between projecting piers. The main walls have a bluestone plinth as does the tiled verandah. The building retains its original or early garden layout, and decorative urns flanking the front steps.

### Integrity

The building is substantially intact. The side trellis shade house has gone, the natural cement render has now been painted, cast iron ridge cresting removed, and early colour schemes gone. Some later windows have been inserted in the original openings in the wings behind the verandah. At the very rear there is a modest new addition. There is a later picket fence, or a cut down original fence, from the 1900s period. However, this relates to the character of the house, especially as it is combined with a pittosporum hedge.

### Analysis

'Wynduk' is the sole remaining house of a very prominently located and important sequence of late 19th century single storey villas. These were built within a short time frame along High Street and are shown in an early twentieth century panoramic photograph taken from the Town Hall Tower. It thus serves as an important reminder of the original substantial residential character dating from the Boom-era when these houses faced 'Northbrook', and 'Wynduk' was adjacent to 'Clifton'.

This house is an excellent example of the high boom era villa built just as the crash occurred. Its association with the boom and crash is epitomised by its brief occupancy by Benjamin Fink, former MLA for Maryborough. He was described by Michael Cannon as being 'considered the greatest suburban and city landboomer in Australian history'. His occupancy was shortly after the collapse of his financial empire, and his return to Melbourne after his flight from his creditors. The surrounding area also had associations with other prominent land boomers.

The house is of note for the overall design, the elaborate bull nose verandah, cast iron decoration, encaustic floor tiles, elaborate rendered detailing, and generous scale. There are few surviving houses in Melbourne that so well demonstrate these features for this style and typology. The high level of intactness is confirmed by a comparison with the early photographs.

### Significance

*'Wynduk', 1310 High Street was built in 1891 for Samuel Bloomfield. The house was briefly occupied by Benjamin Fink, former MLA for Maryborough, 'considered the greatest suburban and city landboomer in Australian history' shortly after the collapse of his financial empire.*

'Wynduk' is of regional significance as an imposing single storey late Italianate villa, and for its relative intactness. It formerly occupied a key location between a number of grand and important houses, and is now the sole remaining Victorian villa of a sequence of equally elaborate buildings. 'Wynduk' is also very important for its brief occupation by Victoria's most notorious land boomer Benjamin Fink after his financial collapse.

Physical elements that contribute to significance:

- the two projecting semi-octagonal bays
- the verandah which returns on both sides of the house, for the main two rooms
- verandah is an elaborate cast iron bull-nose design
- the slate hipped roof
- stuccoed chimneys with heavy cornices
- walls are stuccoed with paired eave brackets separated by garlands.
- bluestone plinth as does the tiled verandah
- original or early garden layout
- decorative urns flanking the front steps.

## Criteria

The building easily meets the criteria for local significance as required by state government guidelines. This is defined by the *Local Government Heritage Guidelines*, Department of Planning and Housing, 1991, (p6)

*Places of local significance are of particular importance to a local community, or part of a community, which is usually defined by a local government area (this was pre amalgamation). The majority of places which are determined to be of cultural value will be of local significance. Relatively fewer places will be determined to be of state or national significance.*

*The normal means of management for places of local significance is inclusion ... in the local planning scheme.*

More recently, the Practice Notes to the Victorian Planning Provisions included *Applying the Heritage Overlay*, Department of Infrastructure, February 1999, confirm the 1991 criteria and also recommend the use of the AHC criteria.

*Under the Australian Heritage Commission's eight broad criteria, a place may possess significance or other special value for future generations as well as the present community.*

This property has been considered to meet the following AHC criteria:

**Criterion A:** *its importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history*

Demonstrates historic associations with Melbourne's land boom

**Criterion D:** *its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:*

i) *a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or*

ii) *a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments*

An excellent example of a single storey elaborate late Italianate villa

**Criterion E:** *its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group*

Demonstrates classic architectural features that are widely appreciated by the community.

**Criterion H:** *its special associations with the life or works of a person, a group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history*

For its associations with the 'the greatest [land boomer] of them all' Benjamin Fink, shortly after his financial collapse

# ATTACHMENTS

## 1 CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHS



Main front view of house, showing early garden layout and urns, compare with early photo



Entry detail



Fence and gate

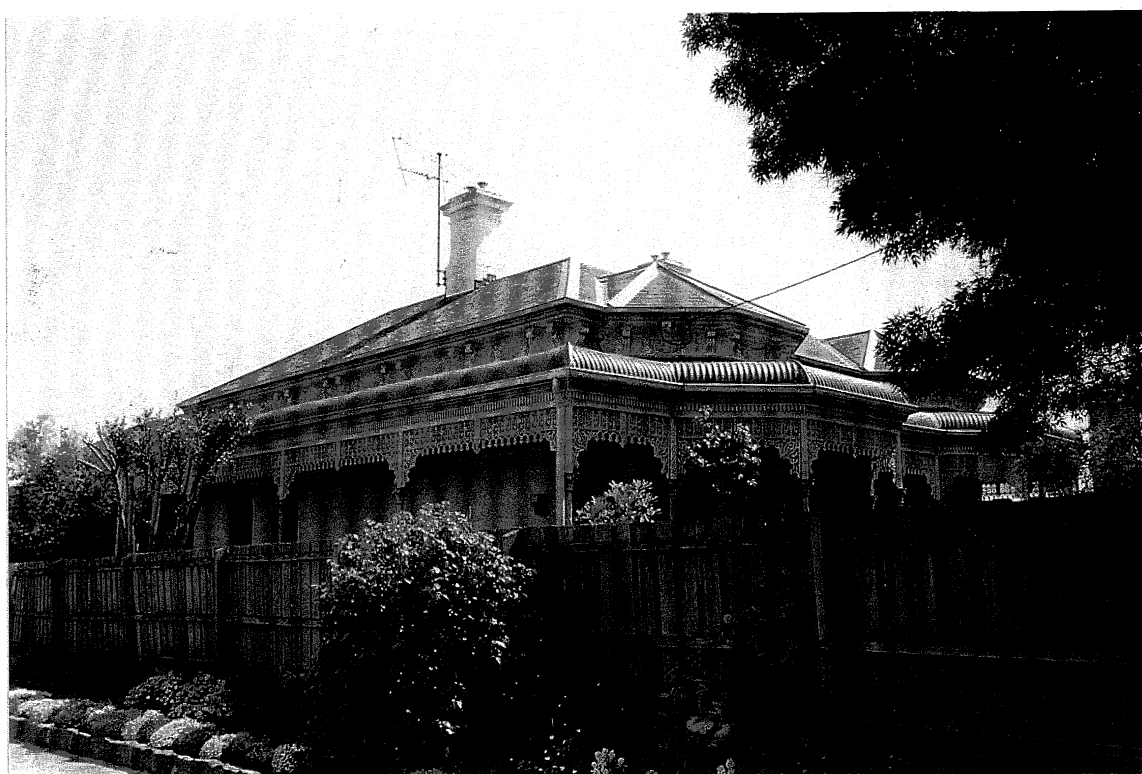


Overall view from north west, compare with early photo





Rear west wing with window alterations, and new addition at rear



North east view, showing gap behind verandah where shade house missing



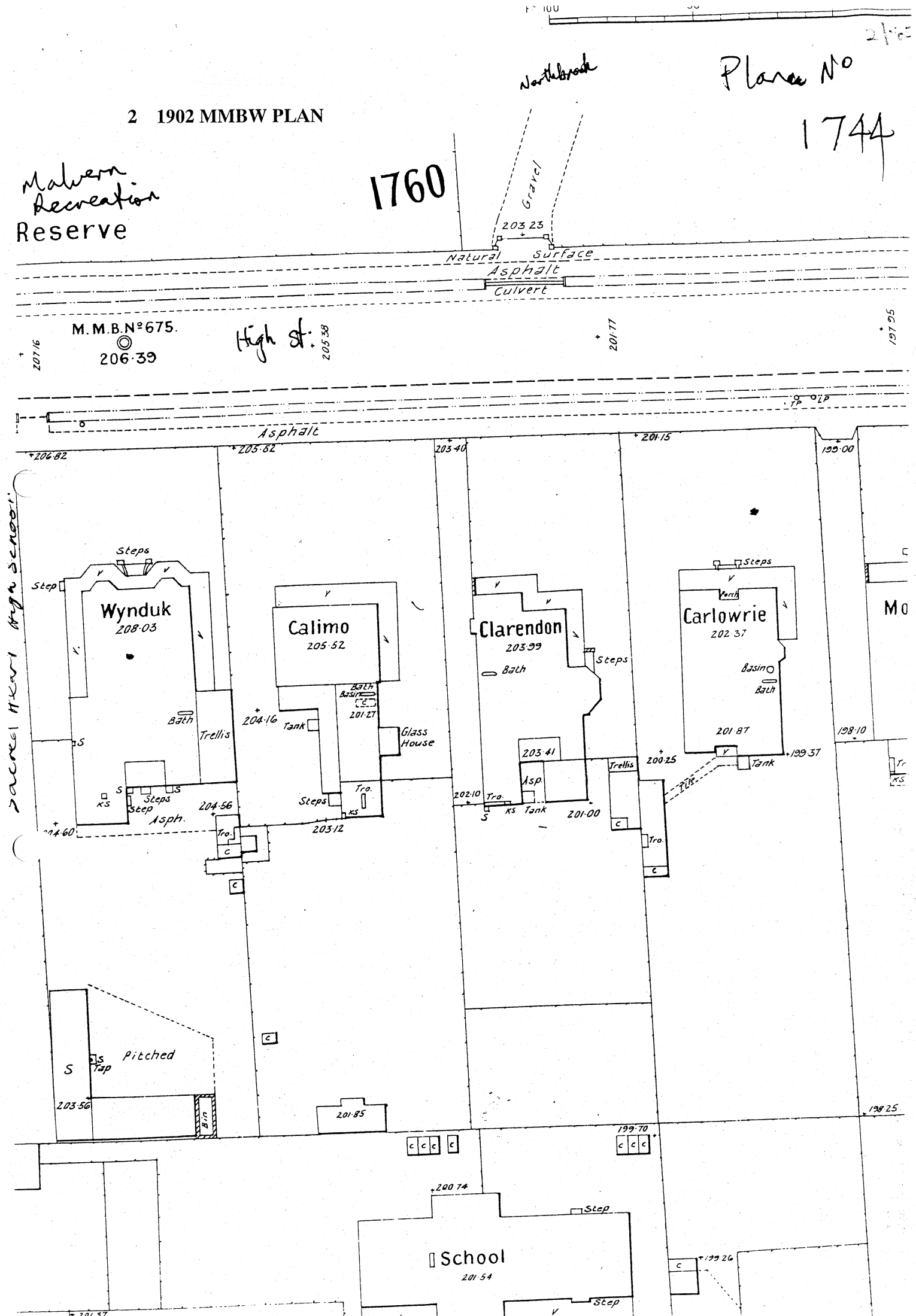
Detail of verandah roofing and cast iron decoration

Malvern  
Recreation  
Reserve

1760

Planca N<sup>o</sup>

1744

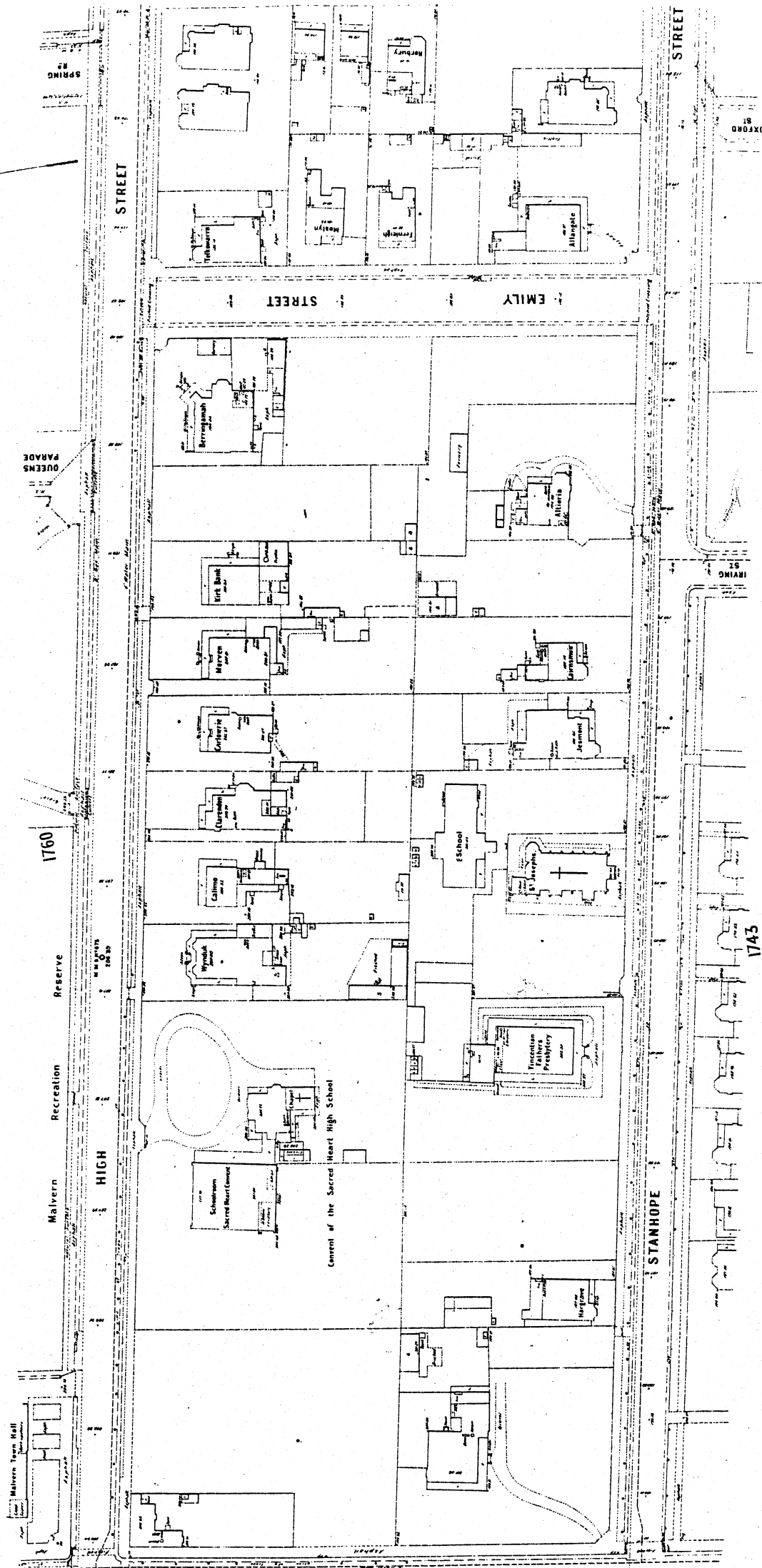


# MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS.

## TOWN OF MALVERN

DETAIL PLAN N° 1744.

Scale - 40 Feet - 1 inch -



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### 3 EARLY PHOTOGRAPHS

1,2 Scott family collection



Scott family

1310 High St.

