

‘Wykeham Lodge’

2B Erskine Street, Armadale

Place type: Residential Buildings (private), Villa

Significance level: Local



Recommended protection: Planning Scheme

Architectural style: Victorian Period (1851-1901) Queen Anne Revival / Scottish Baronial

Locality history

The locality of Armadale emerged in the 1870s at the eastern end of Toorak. The suburb straddled both the older municipality of Prahran and the newer one of Malvern, with Boundary Road (now Kooyong Road) marking the boundary between the two. The name Armadale derived from the name of the grand residence of Victorian politician James Munro, ‘Armadale House’, built in 1876. Other mansions and fine villas followed, including ‘Brocklesby’ (1879) and ‘Flete’ (1882-83). Along Orrong Road, between High Street and Dandenong Road, an impressive row of five mansions was built for some of Melbourne’s leading businessmen in the 1880s. These were ‘Larnook’, ‘Redcourt’, ‘Sebrof’, ‘Lalbert’ and ‘Kabratook’ (demolished) (Foster, 1996).

Through the 1880s, Armadale was promoted as an exclusive residential area for the middle class, with subdivisions offering generous suburban allotments. A railway station had opened at Armadale in 1879 to service the new Oakleigh railway line and this was used as a drawcard to attract buyers to the area. Much of Armadale’s housing stock reflects its foundational period of the 1880s and early 1890s. As well as the large ornate homes of the wealthy, there were streets of comfortable middle-class suburban homes, including double-storey terrace rows, along with pockets of smaller, more modest homes, including some working-class cottages.

Commercial development along High Street, including shops and other services, served the surrounding residential area. The Prahran and Malvern Tramways Board established a tram route along High Street to the city in the early 1900s. In the 1930s and 1940s, as more and more of the large homes in the area were broken up and the land subdivided, antique furniture

was in oversupply. In the 1940s the shops in High Street began to carry antiques and *objets d'art*, catering for an upper-middle-class clientele, and laying the foundation for what later became a high-end shopping strip.

Place history

This site was developed following the 'Brocklesby Estate' subdivision of c.1886-87. The advertising material for the land sale promoted the allotments as 'the cream of Armadale'. The site of 2B Erskine Street, which was lot 5 of the subdivision, remained vacant in 1890.

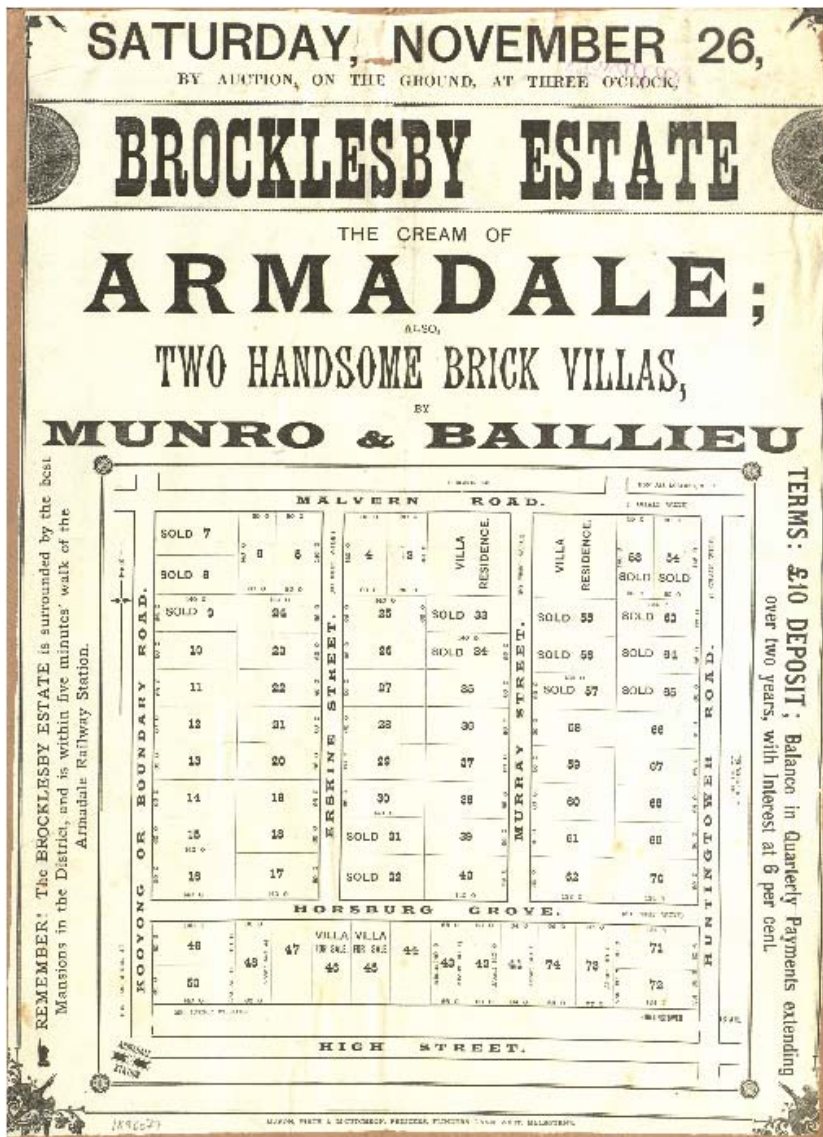


Figure 1. Subdivision plan for the Brocklesby Estate, c.1886/1887. The subject land was Lot 5 of this subdivision. (source: State Library of Victoria)

A double-storey residence was built in 1891 for Charles Shuter, a recently retired police Magistrate (who also had other houses built for him in Malvern in the late 1880s) (Sharpe 2016). Given Shuter's social connections and position the house was almost certainly architect-designed though no record of the architect has been found.

Shuter was employed by the Victoria Police in the 1870s, stationed for over 25 years at Bacchus March police station. He had arrived in Victoria in c.1855 and served as a goldfields commissioner. Shuter retired from the police force in the early 1890s and was on a pension from the police force.

Shuter and his wife moved in fashionable and influential social circles and were well-connected with the Melbourne Establishment. In 1894 the house was occupied by the one-time Australia's richest man, W.J.T. 'Big' Clarke, and Lady Clarke who took the house 'for a term'

while the Shuters presumably spent time elsewhere, possibly overseas on holidays (*Table Talk* 3 Dec 1894).

The MMBW detail plan of 1902 shows a substantial villa residence fronting Malvern Road (its original address) with a splayed corner entrance and another entrance on Erskine Street. It encompassed both 2B and 2A Erskine Street. A gravel drive led to rear stables and a separate coach house (both demolished), the latter indicating a level of affluence. The house was fully plumbed in 1902 with a bath and basin inside as well as two toilets attached to the rear of the house.

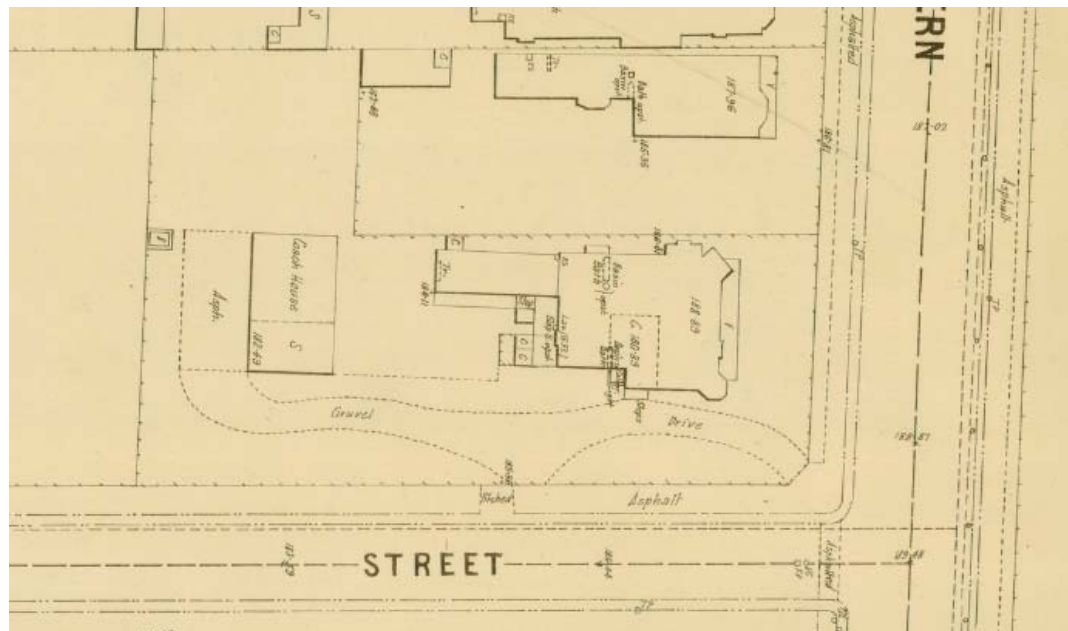


Figure 2. MMBW Detail Plan no. 1763, dated 1902. (source: SLV)

In the 1902 postal directories Shuter is shown as living at this house which he called 'Wykeham Lodge'. After his death in 1902, while holidaying in Europe, he left the house to his widow. Mrs Shuter remained the owner and occupant in 1915. Miss E. Craig lived there between the wars.

Sources

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Tibbits, George 'An Emanation of Lunacy' in Howells, Trevor & Nicholson, Michael 1989, *Towards the Dawn: Federation Architecture in Australia 1890-1915*, Hale & Iremonger.

Victorian Places, www.victorianplaces.com.au, accessed 29 July 2016.

Physical description

'Wykeham Lodge', at 2B Erskine Street, Armadale, stands on the south-west corner of Malvern Road and Erskine Street and addresses both frontages with the main entrance to Erskine Street. It has garden setbacks to both streets, as well as a back yard to the south of the house. The house is primarily two storeys in height, with a single-storey rear wing. It is a Queen Anne villa with a Scottish Baronial influence.

The walls are of red brick with cement-render decorative details (both overpainted). The roof form is a variation on the Victorian M-profile hip roof which typically has a low transverse gable above the front façade and two rear hips divided by a valley. Here the rear hips remain the same, but the front half of the roof is a high hip more typical of the Queen Anne style. This front part of the house is slightly wider than the rear half, and has projecting gables to the east and west elevations as well as projecting bay windows at front corners. The use of projecting gables and the creation of a diagonal axis became common features of the Federation Queen Anne style. At the north-east cornice is an octagonal tower with a pointed roof with bell-cast (flared) eaves, which is a marker of the Scottish Baronial style. It is clad in terracotta shingles, which appear to be original, with a metal (possibly copper) finial at its apex. Three chimneys are visible, two to the north side and one at the south side. All are of red brick with a moulded cement-render cornice and vertical bands.



Figure 3. East (main) elevation of 2B Erskine Street. (Source: Marshall White, 2015)

The front entrance is located at the middle of the east elevation. It is a small porch that sits within the envelope of the house. Above the entranceway is an elaborate hood in the form of a triangular classical pediment resting on consoles.

The location of the front door is marked by a roof gable above, with a complex bargeboard with a decorative hammer-beam truss. It is finely detailed, with stop-chamfering to the framing members, turned knobs at their ends, roundels at the joints, and flat sunburst motifs at the top and corners in the area between the bargeboard and truss. Finally there is a pendent-finial with a turned point at the top. The decorative truss frames an ox-eye (elongated ellipse) louvered vent with a keystone on each of four sides.

Windows are narrow with flat-arched heads, double-hung sashes and a highlight. Many of the highlights retain leadlights with multiple tiny square panes (up to 27 clear panes in a narrow coloured-glass border). The first-floor windows of the north elevation do not have highlights (but real estate photos of 2015 show them at ground-floor level). Each window has a cement-

render projecting sill and a decorative render apron with a double scroll detail. A more elaborate leadlight window is visible next to the front door with a hand-painted evergreen tree in its central pane.

To the rear of the house is a narrow single-storey wing along the western boundary, which corresponds to the 1902 footprint shown on the MMBW plan. The metal-framed conservatory behind the eastern part of the house appears to be a post-1902 addition.

Views to the ground-floor are partially obscured by a high brick fence. From aerial images it appears that there is a single-storey carport adjacent to the north elevation of the house, which has replaced the north verandah seen on the 1902 MMBW plan. The brickwork of the house has been overpainted, the original red colour of the bricks is visible on the chimneys. The roof covering has been renewed with a modern profile terracotta tile, possibly replacing original terracotta shingles as seen on the pointed roof of the bay window.

The coachhouse and stables seen on the 1902 MMBW Detail Plan have been replaced with a contemporary dwelling at 2A Erskine Street.

Comparative analysis

Victoria's economic crash of the early 1890s creates an obvious boundary between the excesses of the ornate 'Boom-style' architecture, characterised by exuberant cement-coated facades and cast-iron detail which draw upon classical forms, and the simpler Federation-era houses with their more natural palette of face brick and timber fretwork influenced by the Arts & Crafts movement. In fact, some architects had already been experimenting with this materials palette and new forms of massing in the late 1880s.

The residential style known in Australia as Queen Anne Revival was dominant by the turn of the century, and formed the builder's vernacular by 1915. The origins of the Queen Anne Revival style, in its more traditional form as well as its transformation into the recognisably Australian Federation villa, were English Domestic Revival designs by English architects Richard Norman Shaw and William Eden Nesfield. They drew their inspiration from traditional English rural buildings and Tudor architecture (Tibbits 1989:52).

The first Queen Anne Revival houses in Australia, dating from the late 1880s to mid-1890s, were mostly architect designed and show a more direct British influence as well as a greater stylistic eclecticism than the Federation Queen Anne houses that filled Melbourne's suburbs after 1900. These houses often had a pronounced vertical massing and gabled roofs, showing a strong medieval influence. This contrasts with later sprawling Federation bungalows with hipped roofs extending over encircling verandahs. Apart from medieval (mainly Gothic and Tudor) influences, architects of this period drew upon styles as diverse as Romanesque (with muscular round arches and banded voussoirs), Scottish Baronial (with its pointed towers and crow-stepped parapets), Anglo-Dutch (with curvilinear gable parapets), Art Nouveau (with its sinuous ornament), and Japanese design (with overlapping line patterns of verandah fretwork). A correct, 'academic' use of historical forms was rare, instead they were employed and combined to suit the architect's fancy in a manner often referred to as 'Free Style'.

One of the biggest changes from Victorian Italianate to Queen Anne houses was in the form of the roof and verandah. The low-line M-profile hipped roof was supplanted by high gabled and hipped roofs with complex forms, turrets and gablets at the top. Tall chimneys of corbelled red brick, often with roughcast detail, were another distinguishing feature. Eventually the separate verandah structure, set below the eaves, was replaced by an unbroken roofline that swooped down to incorporate the verandah. Another transition seen in the late 1880s and 1890s was in cladding materials, moving from brown Hawthorn and cream brickwork to simpler red face brick with render bands, and from slate roofs to terracotta Marseille tiles with decorative ridgecapping and finials. Red brick combined with lighter bands, of cream brick or smooth render, is referred to colloquially as 'blood and bandages'. Howells (1989:16) believes this wall treatment was derived from the polychromy of English Gothic Revival architects.

The early Queen Anne houses made use of decorative window treatments such as margin glazing and tiny square panes of coloured glass for highlight windows. By about 1900 this was supplanted by curvilinear Art Nouveau leadlight patterns.

Examples of these early Federation houses of the late 1880s and 1890s graded Significant in the Stonnington Heritage Overlay can be divided into several groups according to size and stylistic advancement. The largest are mansions such as 'Redcourt' at 506 Orrong Road, Armadale (HO166), 6 Mayfield Avenue, Malvern (HO275), 'Edzell' at 76 St Georges Road, Toorak (VHR H691), and 'Illawarra' at 1 Illawarra Court, Toorak (VHR H701).

The greatest number are large houses, some on tighter inner-suburban blocks and others on sprawling sites where the building could be designed 'in the round'. Significant examples include the duplex at 3 & 5 Mercer Road, Armadale (HO327), 15 Avondale Road, Armadale (in HO123), 190-192 Wattletree Road, Malvern (in HO156), 10 Manning Road, Malvern (in HO133), 92 Finch Street, Malvern East (in HO133), 3 Forster Avenue, Malvern East (HO260), 15 Forster Avenue, Malvern East (HO310), 33, 45 & 49 Grandview Grove, Prahran (in HO135), 59 Kensington Road, South Yarra (HO64), 280 Domain Road, South Yarra (in HO122), 18 & 20 Hawksburn Road, South Yarra (in HO137), and 70 Clendon Road, Toorak (in HO143).

Finally, there are the modest single-storey villas that exhibit the transition from the Victorian Italianate to Edwardian Queen Anne. Often they still have an Italianate M-profile hipped roof, and cast-iron verandah detail, but with a gabled projecting bay to the façade instead of the hipped bay seen on Italianate houses and always with the newly fashionable red face brick. Significant examples of this type include 103 Kooyong Road, Armadale (in HO130), 12-16 Mercer Road, Armadale (HO328-330), and 38 Gladstone Street, Windsor (in HO134).

'Wykeham Lodge' can be compared to a number of other large houses that combine an early expression of the Queen Anne Revival with the distinctive corner tower form of the Scottish Baronial style. The two earliest examples were both designed by prominent architecture practice Reed, Henderson & Smart: 59 Kensington Road of 1884, and 'Homeden' on Lansell Road, Toorak of 1889 (demolished). 'Wykeham Lodge' shares many telling details with 'Homeden', which suggests they were both designed by Reed, Henderson & Smart. These include the corner tower with flared eaves, the sunburst motif to the gables, the scrolled aprons below the windows, and the applied pediment detail.



Figure 4. 'Homeden' of 1889, but Reed, Henderson & Smart (demolished). (source: Lewis 2004:80)

Other houses that are similar in scale and form to 'Wykeham Lodge', but whose architects have not been identified, include 33 and 49 Grandview Grove.



Figure 5. 33 Grandview Grove, Prahran (Significant in HO135). (source: www.walkingmelbourne.com)

The more intact of the two, 33 Grandview Grove, also combines the medieval corner tower and gable with classical details such as the cast swags to the tower and the columns front porch. The house at 49 Grandview Grove has a more medieval approach, but has lost its return verandah and the brick walls have been overpainted.

In conclusion, 'Wykeham Lodge' compares well in its scale, massing and quality of detail to the Grandview Grove houses, and sits between them in its intactness.

Thematic context

This place illustrates the following themes, as identified in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, rev. 2009):

8.2.1 'Country in the city' - Suburban development in Malvern before WWI

8.4.1 Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion

Assessment against criteria

Assessment of this place was carried out in relation to the HERCON model criteria as set out in the VPP Practice Note 'Applying the Heritage Overlay' (2015).

Statement of significance

What is significant?

'Wykeham Lodge', at 2B Erskine Road, Armadale, was built in 1891 for Charles Shuter, a police Magistrate, as his retirement home. Considering stylistic similarities, it appears that the house was designed by prominent Melbourne architectural practice Reed, Smart & Tappin.

The house is a substantial two-storey brick residence with cement-render detail (all overpainted). The roof has a high hip, with a corner tower which retains terracotta shingles. The house is entered via an inset porch on the east elevation. It once had a front verandah facing Malvern Road, but this has been removed.

The front carport, rear addition and the brick front fence are not significant.

How is it significant?

'Wykeham Lodge' is of local architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Architecturally, it is an example of a substantial early Queen Anne Revival house, here with an eclectic Scottish Baronial influence seen in the corner tower. It displays features that would become typical of Queen Anne Revival houses such as the use of red face brick with cement-render dressings, a high hipped roof, corner bay windows to create diagonal axes, projecting gables, and highlight windows with tiny coloured panes of glass. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, the house is distinguished by high-quality details from eclectic stylistic sources used in a free manner. They include the elaborate gable treatment like a hammer-beam truss with infill of sunburst motifs, the terracotta shingles and flared eaves of the corner tower, the elaborate classical pedimented hood marking the entrance porch, and other cement-render details such as the ox-eye gable vent and the scalloped apron mouldings to the windows. (Criterion E)

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay to the extent of the whole property as defined by the title boundaries.

HO Schedule controls: None

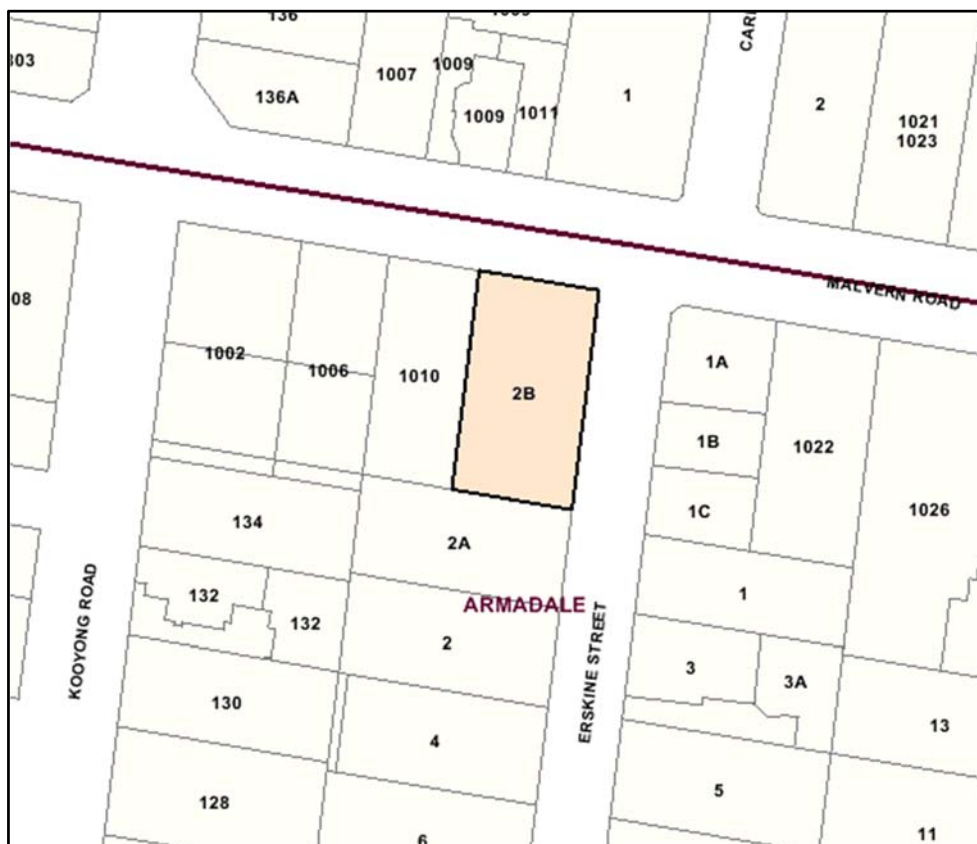


Figure 6: Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 2B Erskine Street, Armadale (source: www.land.vic.gov.au)

Recommended grading: A2