

Irona (later Aldene), 17 Dundonald Avenue, East Malvern - S

1890: Constructed by George Waterstrom, iron founder - manager of McLean's Foundry in Franklin Street. McLean Brothers and Rigg Ltd was one of the most extensive and prosperous hardware concerns in the colonies.

n.d.: The building is shown in its original form in an early undated photograph.

1897: Financial difficulties with the firm apparently lead to its sale to William Borron who changed its name to Woldon.

1901: Sold to William Davidson, bank-manager, name changed to Alaene. Davidson owned 13 lots in the street by the time ownership was transferred to Mrs Davidson in 1918.

1920s: The Davidson land gradually sold to prospective home builders, retaining possession of Aldene.

(Extracted from National Trust research notes by Carlotta Kellaway, 11 February 1975)

1919: Mr W L Davidson O & O (MMBW Drainage Plan).

This building is a curious combination of a late Victorian Italianate villa combined with an attic gable of an Edwardian character. The main lower level has a low pitched hipped slate roof and a restrained balcony with a cast iron frieze. It has conventional double hung windows and projecting bays, polychrome brick work. The upper level is far more elaborate. It has cast iron cresting on the ridge line, three bands of decorative slates and a complex timber fretted detail to the gable end of the attic. The barge boards have an unusual cast iron cresting, the gable end is clad in terracotta shingles and there is an Art Nouveau pattern to the cast iron balustrading beneath the attic casement window. The building has been partially altered, in particular the verandah at the ground floor has lost the verandah brackets and gable and cast iron pediment over the entry. On the upper level the terracotta shingles have now been painted.

Aldene is set in a large garden with a formal Victorian layout. This design was once relatively common in Melbourne, with an oval lawn in front of the house and axial paths on both sides of the house. It also retains mature shrubs and trees and an early hedged picket fence and is appears to be relatively intact.

(Aldene is of state significance as an extremely unusual villa that marks the transition between Victorian Italianate and Edwardian design characteristics. The unusual attic and details are of particular note. The early setting garden has attributes that are now rare in the metropolitan area.