

‘Ardeer’

22 Armadale Street, Armadale

Place type: Residential Buildings (private), Villa

Significance level: Local



Recommended protection: Planning Scheme

Architectural style: Victorian period (1851-1901) Italianate

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.

From the early twentieth century, many of Melbourne's large mansion homes set in large garden settings became unsustainable. Large estates were subdivided for residential development, and sometimes the house survived on a much reduced allotment. Large private homes were also converted into multiple dwellings or 'flats', or operated as boarding houses. Large houses were also converted for use as private hospitals (for example 'Alencon') and schools (for example, 'Brocklesby' and 'Blairholme').

Place history

Joseph Bulling, contractor (or builder), occupied this allotment on the east side of Armadale Street in 1890. The following year, 1891, a 7-room brick residence had been erected, suggesting that Bulling had erected it (RB). The same year, Bulling advertised for tile-layers in Armadale Street, presumably for the completion of the house (*Age*, 25 August 1891).

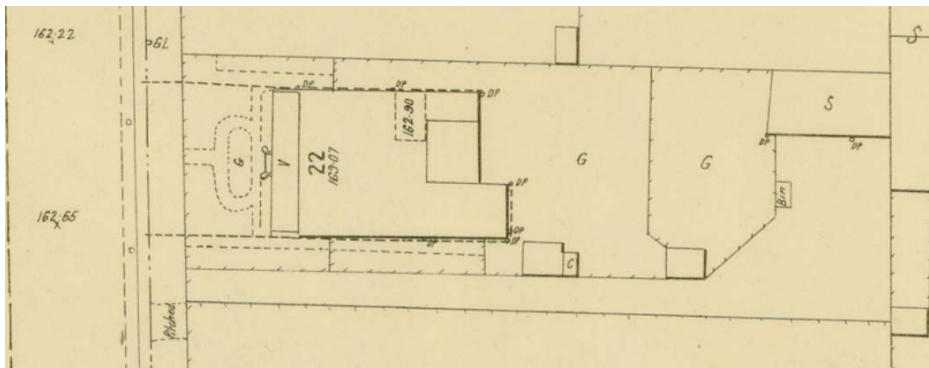


Figure 1. MMBW Detail Plan no. 995, dated 1901, showing allotment no. '22' on the north side of Armadale Road (source: SLV).

The MMBW Detail Plan of 1901 shows the house on a deep block with rear garden and stables. There is an enclosed works area at the rear of the house. The front garden is laid out with an ornamental circular path that leads to the front verandah and entrance. At that time the house was described in the rate books as a brick house of 9 rooms (RB).

From the start, in 1891, the house was leased to the notable plant pathologist and biologist Daniel McAlpine (1849–1932) (RB). McAlpine had arrived in Australia from Scotland with his wife Isabella (nee Williamson) in 1884. He had been educated at the Ardeer School in Ayrshire, where his father taught, and McAlpine taught there too for a time before undertaking further study. He was appointed to a lecturing position at the University of Melbourne in 1884 and from 1890 also served as Victoria's first Government Vegetable Pathologist. When McAlpine and his family took up residence at 22 Armadale Street, Armadale in c.1891, he named the house 'Ardeer' in affectionate memory of his first place of learning and teaching (Royal Society of Vic. 1891).

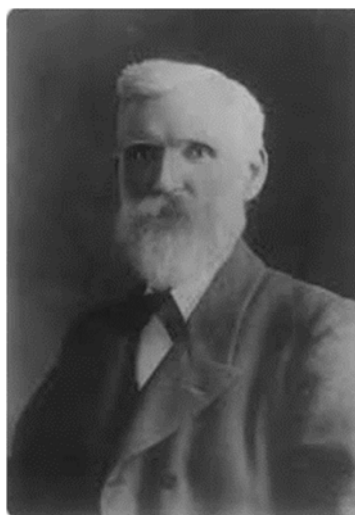


Figure 2. Portrait of Daniel McAlpine (source: Douglas G Parberry 2015).

McAlpine's appointment as Government Vegetable Pathologist was largely in response to the devastating problem of rusts in the wheat crops of 1889, and McAlpine worked closely with the leading wheat expert William Farrer in investigating this problem (White 1986). McAlpine established a laboratory in his home at 22 Armadale Street, where he tested and experimented with plants (Parberry 2015: 45). He produced a significant body of academic work on plant and plant health, and for the first 15-16 years all his work was done 'from a small room of his home at Armadale' (White 1986; Carr 1981: 44). The publications he wrote from his home in Armadale included *Fungal Diseases of Citrus Fruits in Australia and Their Treatments* (1891), *Systematic Arrangement of Australian Fungi* (1895), *Fungal Diseases of Stone Fruit Trees in Australia* (1902), and *The Rusts of Australia* (1906), and several *Annual Reports of the Pathologists Branch* for the Department of Agriculture. McAlpine also provided extensive high-quality photographs for his many publications, which he produced himself at home in his laboratory (White 1986). The Victorian Government eventually provided McAlpine with an office in Flinders Street, Melbourne, in 1906, where he relocated his work (Parberry 2015: 45).

By 1913, McAlpine had moved to a house at 44 Mathoura Road, Toorak (ER).

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Physical description

The residence at 22 Armadale Street is a grand two-storey Italianate detached terrace that occupies a relatively wide allotment on the east side of Armadale Street at the intersection with Cambridge Street. The house is set back behind a mid-sized garden and a modern masonry front wall. A short driveway is located along the southern boundary, which now terminates at a new carport, but once provided access to rear stables and outbuildings.

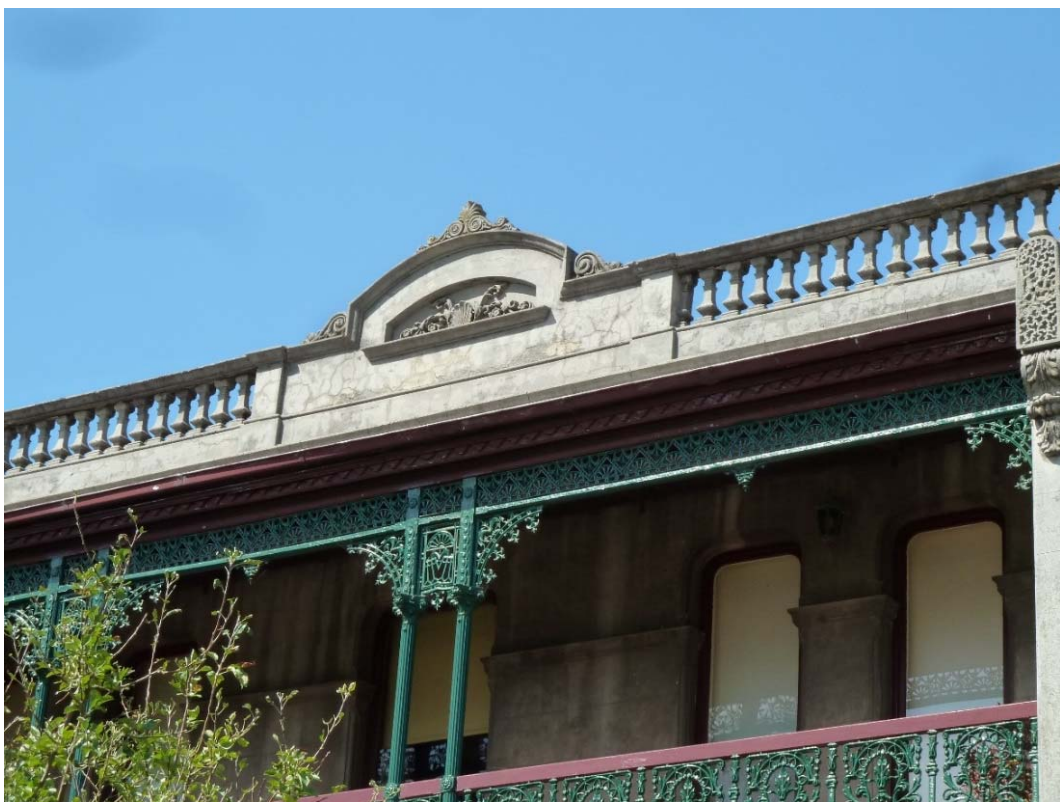


Figure 3. Detail of parapet pediment and fine cast-iron verandah (source: Context 2016).

Constructed c1891 the building is highly intact and is notable for the quality of the cast and moulded cement render detailing, particularly to the ground floor. The building has an M-type hipped roof clad in slate tiles which is concealed by a tall decorative parapet. At its centre is a segmentally arched pediment with a shell motif set between piers and consoles. On either side is a balustrade with classical balusters which terminates at piers at the outer edges. The cornice sits on paired consoles.

The fine cast-iron two-storey verandah is contained between masonry wing walls with round arched openings at the upper level. A timber framed sash window is fitted to the northern wing wall opening. The high quality floral patterned cast-iron work is supported at mid-span by a pair of fluted cast-iron columns to both levels. The verandah beams have an applied scalloped design on them. The unpainted cement render with a ruled finish has been retained to the front façade, parapet and chimneys with the side walls expressed in red brick. Other

windows to the upper level of the front elevation are full height with unusual rounded corners and impost mouldings in lieu of hood moulds.

The impressive arched front doorway contains an unusual six-panelled door with glazed side and multi-light arched highlights. It is flanked by two niches with inset barley-twist colonnettes. The windows to the ground level are grouped in pairs of segmentally arched double-hung sash windows with cement render hood moulds with vermiculated keystones. The imposts have cast details of acanthus leaves and sit above inset barley-twist colonnettes.

An aerial in 2016 shows that the footprint of the house and property is largely unchanged from its plan in the 1901 MMBW. Minor alterations that were largely internal were undertaken in 1999 when the carport was constructed to the southern boundary of the property (Planning Application 0349-99, City of Stonnington, 1999). There is an outbuilding located at the north-east corner of the property beside the pool. It matches the footprint of the stables as seen on the MMBW plan, and has a gablet on the south side, which would correspond to a hayloft.



Figure 4. Detail of impressive cast and run cement render details to ground floor and elaborate front door composition (source: Context 2016).

Comparative analysis

The terraced house form was introduced from Britain and characterises inner suburban development from the 1850s and 1890s in Australia's capital cities. A terrace house is defined as a dwelling with blind boundary walls, designed to fit on a narrow building block. While the most common type of terrace house in Melbourne is the terrace row, of three or more houses sharing party walls, the terrace house was also built in pairs (semi-detached) and even singly where more space was available (Tibbits & Goad 2012:695).

Terrace houses typically have a full-width front section two rooms deep, with a narrower rear wing with a cut-back to one side allowing windows along it. The privy was located at the rear

of the site, often built in pairs. Early examples (generally pre-1880s in Melbourne's suburbs) of terraced rows and semi-detached pairs often have a continuous roof, eaves and verandahs unbroken by party walls. Later in the century, suburban building regulations dictated visible party walls extending out and up to divide verandahs and roofs, as well as parapet walls. These regulations dictated the form of what is now considered a 'typical' terrace house: single or two-storey dwellings with a strong vertical line defining the extent of each dwelling and the parapet used as the focus for cast-cement and cement-render ornament.

From the 1860s to the 1890s, a distinctive Australian terrace idiom emerged, embellished with cement decoration and full-height verandahs employing cast-iron posts, balustrades, and decorative brackets and frieze (Tibbits & Goad 2012:695-7). Some of the more prestigious examples used masonry arcading (usually rendered brick) instead of the mass-produced cast-iron verandah construction.

While Windsor had by far the densest 19th-century development in Stonnington, inner-suburban South Yarra also had a number of semi-detached terrace house pairs, which was an intermediate density. Further to the east, in Armadale and Malvern, as well as Windsor and South Yarra, we see large single terrace houses on wider blocks with space between them. While not attached, they were often built in rows.

Almost all Victorian terraces could be described as Italianate in style, though some lean toward the more substantial Renaissance Revival. The Italianate style had its origins in the landscape paintings of Nicholas Poussin and Claude Lorrain over a century earlier. These two French artists were enamoured with the landscapes and architecture of rural Italy, depicting it as a vision of Arcadia. Their efforts inspired a broader pursuit of 'the Picturesque' in architecture.

Through the first half of the nineteenth century, the Italianate style spread widely in Britain fuelled by the works of architects such as John Nash and Charles Barry and through designs promoted in pattern books such as Charles Parker's *Villa Rustica* (1832). In 1845, the style received Royal endorsement when Prince Albert, working with architect Thomas Cubitt, designed 'Osbourne' on the Isle of Wight as a retreat for Queen Victoria and the Royal family. 'Osbourne' with its plain stuccoed expression and tall balustraded tower would become the model for many large residences throughout the Empire including Government House in Melbourne.

The style, which emerged as the preferred expression for Melbourne's grandest mansions of the mid-century, was quickly adapted to suit more modest suburban villas and terraces. As Hubbard (2012:357) notes:

Flexibility and adaptability were the secrets to the success of the Italianate style. It could range from the simplest of buildings to the grandest. It was not a precise style and could accommodate different levels of architectural sophistication. It could be formally symmetrical or informally asymmetrical. While towers were standard, they might be reduced to just a porch. The style was easy to copy and could be used by speculative builders buying stock items for decoration. Most importantly, the Italianate style used the vocabulary of classical architecture freely but sparingly, generally with relatively plain expanses of wall and hipped roofs with bracketed eaves.

As the style evolved to accommodate less substantial residential types, the deliberate asymmetry and rambling form inspired by the Picturesque massing of wings and towers of buildings such as 'Osbourne' became less central to the mode. So much so that the Italianate terrace forms of the 1880s were not substantially different to their forebears of a generation earlier apart from an appliqué of 'Italian' detailing.

The Italianate house is so common in the Melbourne area that this is the standard image people hold of the 'Victorian house'. Condensed to its key features, they would be a hipped roof with a M-profile (i.e. having a central valley to the rear half, which allows a low ridgeline), bracketed eaves, chimneys with a cornice at the top (a run cement-render moulding), and a timber or iron-framed verandah with cast-iron ornament to all but the grandest houses. Common extras included a faceted (canted) bay used to create an asymmetric composition (or occasionally used symmetrically), and windows that had a round or segmental arched opening, some of which were embellished with run cement-render mouldings or delicate hood moulds.

There were three general types of cladding for Italianate houses. The most modest were clad in timber weatherboards or blocked boards emulating expensive ashlar. The two most common types were finished in cement render or face brick. Rendered houses could obtain a high level of run and cast ornament at an affordable price, leading to some highly embellished examples. All, even the most modest, had ruled render with incised lines to emulate the more expensive stone construction. Face brickwork was also common, usually dark brown Hawthorn bricks with cream brick dressings (bichrome) from the late 1860s, and later in the century with red brick accents as well (polychrome). Some architects and designer-builders created bold patterns with the coloured bricks. As good building stone was not common in Victoria, very few houses were built of stone. Early examples were of bluestone, such as the grand 'Bishopscourt' in East Melbourne.

The development of the former City of Prahran and the western part of the former City of Malvern coincides with the emergence of the Italianate forms of expression in Victoria. Consequently, the City of Stonnington retains a disproportionate number of Melbourne's better examples of the mode. A number of these, typically the grandest and most elaborate mansions or those associated with Victoria's most notable families, have been added to the Victorian Heritage Register. These include: 'Toorak House', 'Greenwich House' and 'Mandeville Hall', in Toorak; 'Stonington' in Malvern; and 'Malvern House' in Glen Iris.

Examples of Italianate terrace houses that are of individual significance in Stonnington's Heritage Overlay (both in individual HOs and HO precincts) can be divided into a number of groups according to the number of dwellings (attached or detached), their size, ornament and level of architectural sophistication. Examples built in the 1870s until about 1885 have exposed eaves to the front (and sometimes to the sides of end walls), and the walls are usually of bichrome or polychrome face brick. By the late 1880s, all terrace houses had a front parapet, almost always finished in cement render. The walls below were usually rendered as well.

Examples of terrace houses with a fully-fledged parapet, often with cast-concrete balustrades and a pediment at the centre of the row or above each house include the two-storey rows at 45-55 Greville Street, Prahran (in HO456); 167-179 Williams Road, South Yarra (in HO142); 74-80 Sutherland Road, Armadale (in HO397); 167-179 Williams Road, South Yarra (in HO142); 6-18 Avoca Street, South Yarra (in HO150); and 286-292 Williams Road, Toorak (in HO155); two-storey detached houses at 906 Malvern Road, Armadale (in HO130); and two-storey semi-detached houses at 17-19 Hawksburn Road, South Yarra (in HO137); 1-1A Evelina Road, Toorak (in HO380); and the particularly ornate 11-13 Cromwell Road, South Yarra (HO228). The most ornate of these houses are considered Boom-style examples of the Italianate.

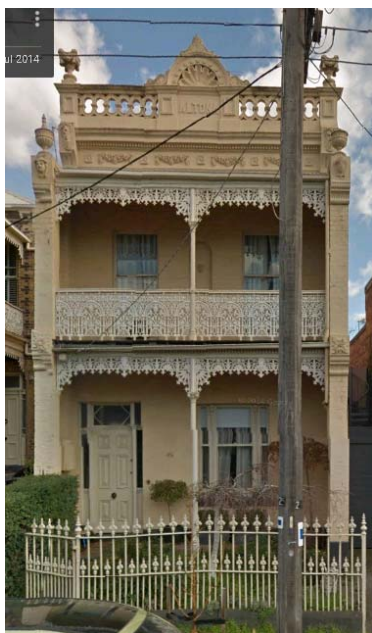


Figure 5. 25 Hawksburn Road, South Yarra significant in HO137 (source: Google Streetview).

The house at 906 Malvern Road, Armadale (in HO130) does not conform to our definition of a terraced house, however it is also a useful comparison in size and detailing. It is a two-storey painted render house, which is expressed entirely to the façade with a two-storey verandah with cast-iron lace and a balustraded parapet.



Figure 6. 906 Malvern Road, Armadale, significant in HO130 (source: Google Streetview).

In comparison with these examples, ‘Ardeer’ is a highly intact example of the terraced form. As a triple-fronted single terrace it is also of a grander scale than the examples above, particularly in comparison with the other detached terrace at 25 Hawksburn Road, South Yarra, and the house at 906 Malvern Road, Armadale. The Hawksburn Road examples adopt more elaborate pediments at their parapets, however, ‘Ardeer’ is generally richer in detail, particularly in the applied classical ornamentation to the ground floor. Its two-storey cast iron is most distinguished by its elaborate paired posts marking the entranceway and its fine lacework. It is further distinguished by the retention of an unpainted render finish.

What appears to be intact stables to the rear of ‘Ardeer’ were not picked up as part of the *Stables and Dairies in the City of Stonnington Heritage Project* prepared by Bryce Raworth in 2011 which considered four stables as likely to meet the threshold of local significance in the municipality, including: former stables at 14 Sorrett Avenue, Malvern (HO396, stables graded A2), former stables at 28 Northcote Road, Armadale (in HO130, stables graded A2), former stables at 64 Rose Street, Armadale (in HO130, stables graded A2), and former outbuilding, at 17 Dundonald Avenue, Malvern East (HO308, stables ungraded, further investigation required).

Further investigation of the outbuilding to the rear of ‘Ardeer’ is required to compare the intactness and detailing to the examples above. Regardless, these stables can be seen to be rare survivors in the municipality and they contribute to its significance.

Thematic context

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

3.3.3 Speculators and land boomers

8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal

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?

'Ardeer', at 22 Armadale Street, Armadale, built c1891 and comprising a grand two-storey detached terrace, is significant. It was constructed for builder Joseph Bulling, and leased to Victorian biologist Daniel McAlpine as his residence and laboratory from 1891 to about 1913.

The house is highly intact. It is significant to the extent of its 1890s contributory elements, form and fabric. The legibility of the built form in views from the public realm contributes to the significance of the place.

Modern alterations and additions are not considered to be significant.

How is it significant?

'Ardeer' is of local historical, architectural and aesthetic significance and the stables are of rarity value to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

'Ardeer' is a fine and highly intact representative example of a substantial Victorian Italianate detached terrace residence. (Criterion D)

The 1891 outbuilding to the rear of the house is a rare example of a nineteenth century stable in Stonnington, which illustrates the importance that horse-drawn transport once had and also indicates the high status of this residence to have its own stable. (Criterion B)

The house is of aesthetic significance for its grand size and elaborate detailing that distinguishes it from other houses in this idiom. This includes particularly good examples of cast and moulded cement render detailing which retain their original unpainted finish, fine cast-iron lacework and columns, and decorative parapet, balustrades and cornices. The impressive arched front doorway contains an unusual six-panelled door with sidelights and multi-light arched highlights flanked by two niches with inset barley-twist colonnettes. The windows to the ground level are grouped in pairs of segmentally arched double-hung sash windows with run cement render hood moulds with vermiculated keystones set on enlarged moulded imposts with acanthus leaf cast detail above inset barley-twist colonnettes. (Criterion E)

The house at 22 Armadale Street, Armadale, is of local historical significance as the home of biologist and vegetable expert, Daniel McAlpine, who was the author of a number of important works on the subject, which he wrote from the house where his laboratory was also located. McAlpine produced a significant body of academic work on plant and plant health, and for the first 15-16 years all his work was done from a small room in his Armadale home. This included a number of publications for the Victorian government, and department of agriculture, on diseases affecting Victoria's wheat crops following the devastating wheat rusts of 1889. (Criterion H)

Recommendations

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

HO Schedule controls: Outbuilding Controls - Stables

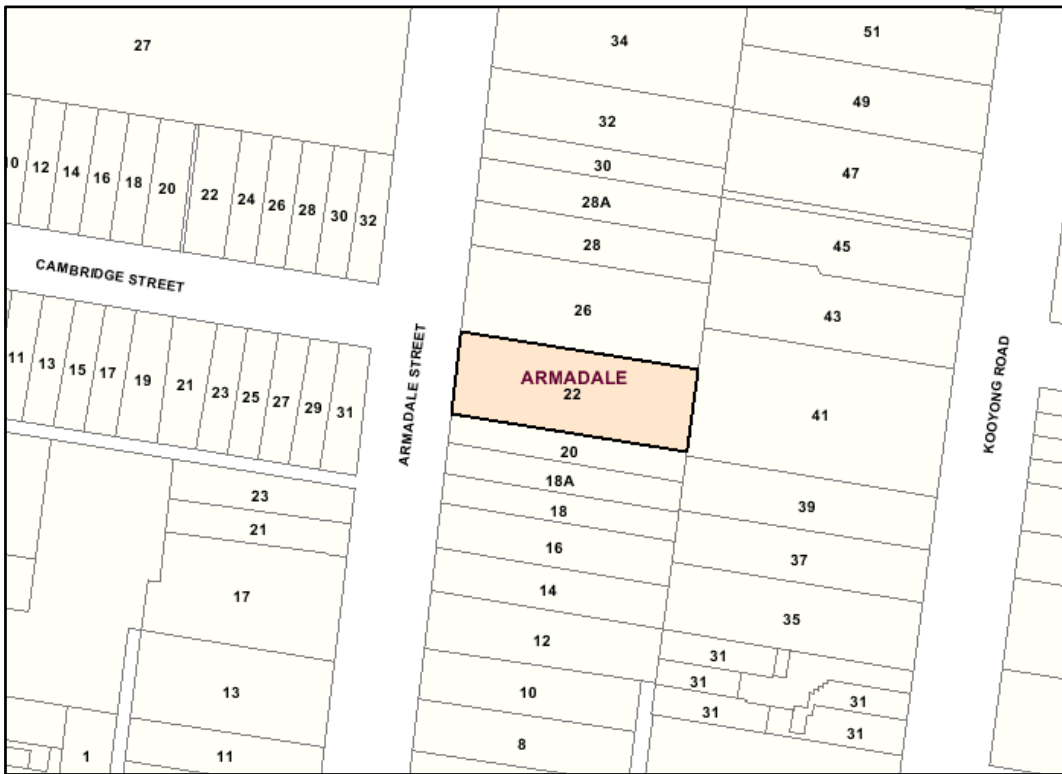


Figure 7: Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 22 Armadale Street, Armadale (source: www.land.vic.gov.au).

Recommended grading: A2