

558 Waverley Road, Malvern East

Place type: Residential Buildings (private), House

Significance level: Local



(source: Marshall White, 2015).

Recommended protection: Planning Scheme

Architectural style: Victorian Period (1851-1901) Italianate

Locality history

The suburb of Malvern East occupies gently undulating country along the Gardiners Creek Valley. It is bordered by Tooronga Road on the west, Dandenong Road on the south, Gardiners Creek on the north and Chadstone Road on the east. This land was first taken up in the 1850s and 1860s for dairying, orchards and market gardening. The farmhouses that were built to take advantage of the rich land fronting Gardiners Creek, such as 'Nirvana' (1858, demolished) have virtually disappeared, although a rare brick farmhouse from the 1890s survives at 558 Waverley Road. While most of Malvern proper was subdivided for suburban allotments by the early 1900s, the area of Malvern East retained much of its rural character into the early twentieth century.

Malvern East is distinguished from Malvern mainly by having, broadly speaking, a slightly younger housing stock. Whereas Malvern was largely developed during the Victoria and Edwardian eras, Malvern East was subdivided for suburban housing from the 1880s, but developed most significantly from the early 1900s and through to the 1950s. Its character is largely Edwardian and interwar in style, with a scattering of older remnant Victorian homes. Many of the earlier Victorian-era mansion houses in the area were demolished with the subdivisions of the large estates that began in the 1880s. Few have survived to the present-day; 'Coronal' (1890) in Lewes Street is a rare exception. The early suburban subdivisions have in turn left some fine Victorian villas, such as 133 Manning Road.

Malvern East is almost entirely residential, with very little industry (the former Nirvana Dairy was a notable exception; demolished 2016). Shopping strips developed along Waverley Road

and Darling Road as did smaller neighbourhood shops, for example on Chadstone Road near Bowen Street. The ever-expanding shopping centre at Chadstone, which opened in the 1960s, now services the retail needs of the area.

Large areas of land were subdivided as interwar housing estates after World War I, notably the Villers-Bretonneux War Service Homes Estate, designed in a tasteful layout with elements of the 'garden suburb', with plantation 'squares' and a conscious mix of house styles to avoid commonplace uniformity. At the eastern extremity of Malvern East, there are newer post-war subdivisions, such as The Rialto, comprising cream brick veneer homes.

Malvern Road, which became Waverley Road, followed the course of Gardiners Creek, which in the 1960s was contained in concrete. The construction of the new South-Eastern Freeway (now Monash Freeway) by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in the early 1960s necessitated the large-scale compulsory acquisition of houses in Malvern East which led to local protests.

Place history

This area, part of the picturesque Malvern Hills and Gardiners Creek valley, was taken up with small farms and orchards from the 1880s, drawing a water supply from the nearby Gardiners Creek. The current single-storey brick house stood on a larger allotment, at one time comprising a little over 10 acres of section 168 and parts of sections 167 and 169 in the Parish of Prahran. Thomas Daley Bruce owned and occupied the site from 1866, where he erected a timber house of two rooms rated at a net value of £27 that same year (RB 1866). Thomas Bruce, market gardener, is listed consistently as the owner and occupant of a residence at section 168, up until 1894, by which time he had replaced the earlier timber house with a brick dwelling (likely the existing house) (RB).

An exact built date for the brick house is difficult to establish, with Bruce having purchased landholdings adjacent to the residence at several times throughout the 1880s, clouding any information to be gleaned from rate book valuations. In 1882, Bruce is listed as the owner of a house and land at section 168 with a value of 45 pounds, then in 1884 a house and land at sections 168 and 167 valued at 100 pounds, and by 1886, a house and land at the same sections with a value of 210 pounds (RB). These records demonstrate that Bruce, who is described as a gardener throughout this time, expanded his property to include open land in the adjacent sections 167 and 169, presumably to accommodate his gardening enterprise. The rate books also indicate that his land holdings shrank at times.

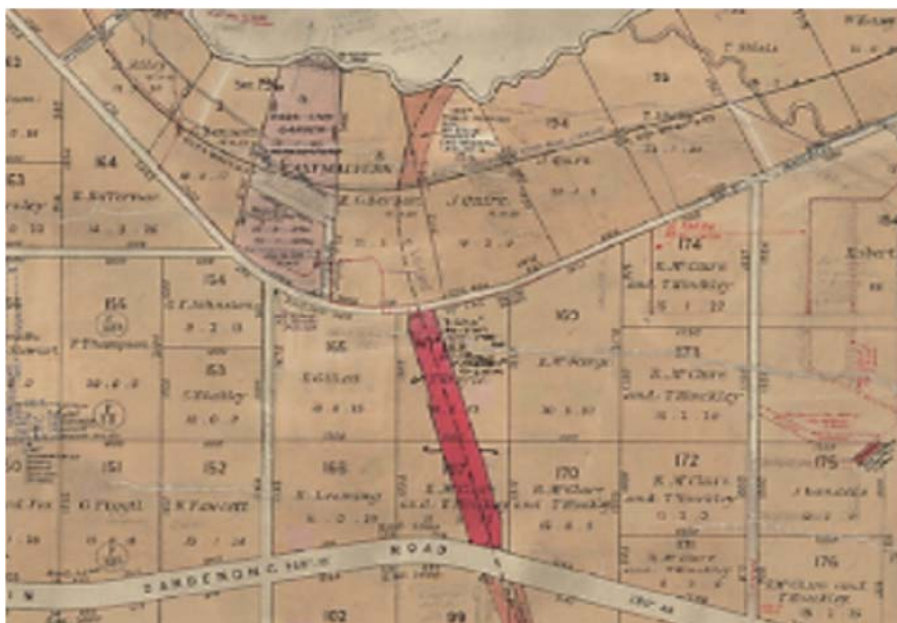


Figure 1. Plan of the Parish of Prahran, showing the site of 558 Waverley Road, being part of larger area first taken up from the Crown (source: PROV).

The next significant jump in the property valuation occurs in the period between 1886 and 1889, the house and land at section 168 and 169 having been rated at 380 pounds that year (RB). This dramatic growth suggests a significant capital increase that could equate to a new dwelling having been erected, along with an appreciation in land value consistent with the height of the late-1880s land boom.

Rate books describe a four-roomed brick house at the site for the first time in 1894. Prior to this time there had been no mention of what Bruce's house was built of, apart from the recording of a timber dwelling in 1866 (RB). It is not known whether the original timber house was extended at this time or replaced entirely by the brick dwelling. In 1894 also came the first change in ownership, changing from Thomas Bruce to another gardener, John Bruce, presumably his son or another relative (RB 1894). By this time the landholdings associated with the property had been reduced significantly, with an annual valuation including the brick house and land at just 18 pounds (RB 1894).

The gradual urbanisation of Malvern East is evident in a subdivision plan dating to the early-1890s, which shows the release of residential allotments between Darling Road and Serrell Street (Figure 2). However, an aerial photograph taken c1929 shows the residence at 558 Waverley Road situated on a large allotment of (vacant) land (Figure 3), indicating that the area's rural character persisted into the twentieth century.

A real estate notice advertising the house for sale in 2015 claims that the house was constructed in c1886 as the original farmhouse in the area, but this has not been confirmed by recent historical research (Realestate.com.au, accessed 26 June 2016).

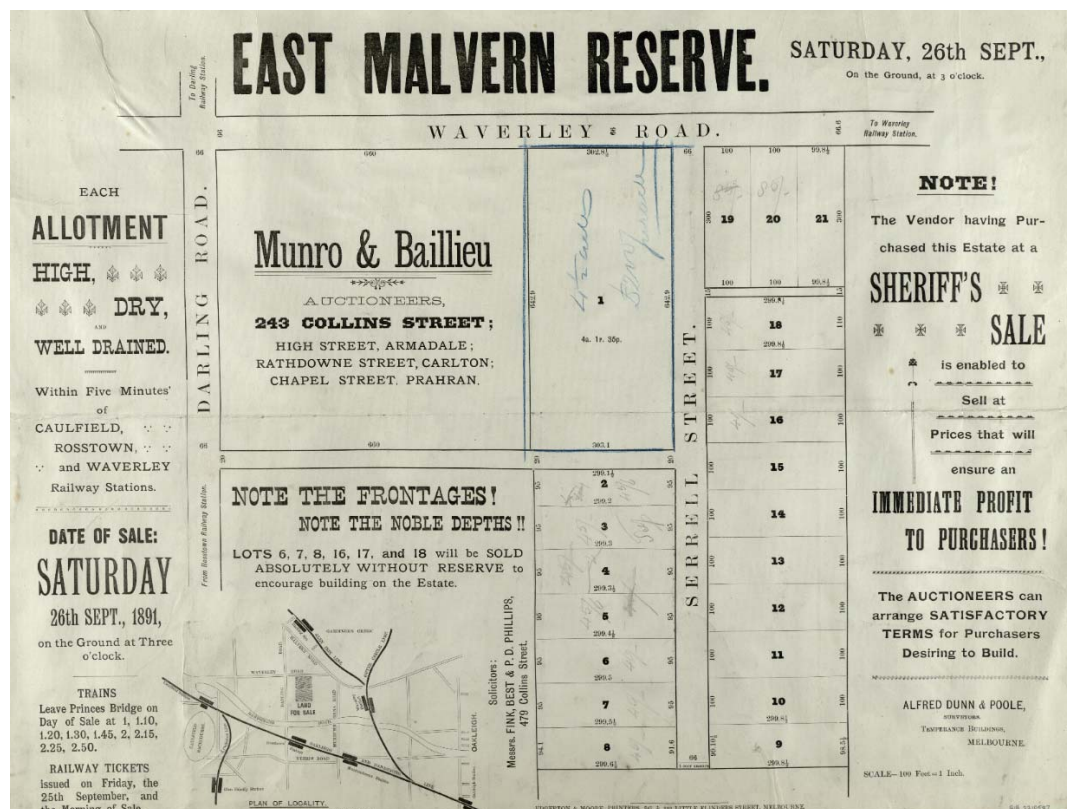


Figure 2. East Malvern Reserve Subdivision Plan 1891, showing vacant residential allotments for sale between Darling Road and Serrell Street (Source: SLV).



Figure 3. Aerial photograph of Malvern East looking east with Waverley Oval in the foreground, c1929-1930. The brick farmhouse at 558 Waverley Road is shown circled in red, with some higher-density residential areas to the south and west (Source: SLV).



Figure 4. Aerial photograph of Malvern East looking west, c1929-1930. The brick farmhouse at 558 Waverley Road is shown circled in red, near high-density residential areas encroaching from the west (Source: SLV).

Sources

'558 Waverley Road, Malvern East', *Realestate.com.au*, www.realestate.com.au, accessed 17 June 2016.

Brown-May and Swain (eds). *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne*. www.emelbourne.net.au, accessed 26 June 2016.

Shire of Malvern, Rate Books (RB).

Sands & McDougall, *Melbourne and Suburban Directories* (S&McD).

Foster, Di, Stonnington History Centre 2016, 'Demolition of "Nirvana", 408 Waverley Road, East Malvern', Photograph with notes prepared by Stonnington History Centre (SHC) MP 13875.

Plan of subdivision, 'East Malvern Reserve', dated 1891, State Library of Victoria (SLV).

PROV VPRS 16171/P1 Parish and Township Plans (Ne-R), Plans Ne-R, Prahran-1 Parish Plan Imperial measure P3416-1, Public Record Office Victoria (PROV).

Strahan, Lynne. *Public and Private Memory: A history of the City of Malvern*. Hargreen Publishing and the City of Malvern, 1989.

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

Whitworth, Robert P. *Bailliere's Victorian Gazetteer and Road Guide*. Baillieres, Melbourne, 1879.

Physical description



Figure 5. Side (west) elevation of the house with the new studio/garage visible to the right of the photograph (source: *Context* 2016).

The house at 558 Waverley Road is a single-storey bichrome brick residence. It occupies a deep allotment on the south side of Waverley Road, mid-block between Hyslop Parade and Sydare Avenue in Malvern East. Views to the house are obscured by a high timber front fence and a mature front garden.

The building has an M-profile hipped roof, clad in corrugated iron, which may be a later change (i.e., from slate) with two wide chimneys, one with a shaft of red face brick and the other finished in unpainted cement render. The chimneys are typical of the era with heavy moulded cornices of unpainted cement render. The walls have modest brown Hawthorn brick dressings, with zigzag quoins to the building corners and around the openings to the front façade only. Walls are of red face brick.

The building has a central front door with sidelights and highlights (replaced) which is surrounded by paired segmentally arched double-hung sash windows. The verandah is raised on a brick plinth supporting a new concrete slab. A shallow concave verandah, indicated by the remnant flashing, has been removed from the front façade. Other alterations to the original

building fabric are the replacement of all windows in-kind (timber double-hung sashes), rendering of the window sills, rebuilding of the verandah slab, and replacement of the front door and timber surround.

There is also a single-storey rear extension, a new single-storey garage/studio along the western boundary, a high exterior pavilion area, all of which are quite recessive when viewed from the street.

Comparative analysis

As discussed in the contextual history, Malvern East was developed for suburban housing much later than Malvern proper, which had been subdivided for suburban allotments by the early 1900s. The area of Malvern East, first taken up in the 1850s and 1860s for dairying, orchards and market gardening, retained much of its rural character into the twentieth century. The farmhouses and buildings associated with this early use have virtually all disappeared, including the early farmhouse, ‘Nirvana’, constructed in 1858 and demolished in 1992.

Malvern East’s character is therefore largely Edwardian and interwar or later in style with very few early houses of the nineteenth century remaining. Many of the earlier Victorian-era mansion houses in the area were demolished as part of the subdivision of the large estates from the 1880s. The grand Italianate mansion, ‘Coronal’ (HO322) constructed in 1890 in Lewes Street is a rare survivor from this period. There are a few Victorian villas in Malvern East that have been retained from early subdivisions, including the villas ‘Oxonia’, at 3 Forster Avenue (HO260) – constructed 1892; ‘Voreppe’, at 9 Forster Avenue (HO261) – constructed 1890; the villas at 127, 129 and 133 Manning Road of 1889; and the bichrome brick villa ‘Wurrong’ at 93 Brunel Road of 1891. These examples are all located west of Belgrave Road.

In this context, the brick residence constructed by 1894 for market gardener, Thomas Daley Bruce, is a rare and early surviving example in Malvern East. It is one of the few remaining houses in the area to have an association with the early agricultural use of the area.

All of the comparative examples are of a similar, modest scale to 558 Waverley Road, but are more sophisticated and up-to-date stylistically, befitting their status as middle-class suburban houses. In comparison, the house at 558 Waverley Road, is a modest example of a nineteenth century farmhouse that is more comparable to the modest Italianate houses of the symmetrical type with a double-fronted flat façade seen in older parts of the municipality, such as Prahran.

Thematic context

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

3.3.2 Crown Land Sales 1854-1879

6.1.1 Farming & market gardens

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?

The house at 558 Waverley Road, Malvern East, comprising a single-storey bichrome brick farmhouse, is significant. It was built by 1894 for market gardener Thomas Daley Bruce, who owned a large portion of land in Malvern East and had lived at this property from as early as 1866.

The new outbuildings and contemporary extensions to the rear are not significant.

How is it significant?

558 Waverley Road, Malvern East is of local architectural and historical significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The house at 558 Waverley Road, Malvern East is a rare surviving example of a Victorian farmhouse type in this eastern end of the municipality. It exhibits typical Victorian Italianate features including an M-profile hipped roof, corniced chimneys and bichrome brick patterning expressed as brown Hawthorn brick dressings to red brick walls. It is one of a small number of nineteenth century houses in Malvern East. (Criterion B & D)

It is of historical significance for its association with the early agricultural use of the Malvern East area which was gradually subdivided for residential subdivision from the 1900s to the 1950s. (Criterion A)

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 558 Waverley Road, Malvern East (source: www.land.vic.gov.au).

Recommended grading: A2