

'Laguna'

25 Winter Street, Malvern

Place type: Residential Buildings (private), House

Significance level: Local



Recommended protection: Planning Scheme

Architectural style: Victorian Period (1851-1901) Italianate

Locality history

Malvern was originally named Gardiner after the early settler John Gardiner, but was renamed Malvern after the property 'Malvern Hills Estate', which had in turn been named for its perceived likeness to the Malvern Hills in Hertfordshire, England. This was pleasant, rolling country on the southern bank of the Gardiners Creek, or *Kooyong Koot*, which was its Aboriginal name. Many praised the picturesque character of the area in the early settlement period (Strahan 1989: 1-3). Journalist William Kelly wrote in 1858 of 'the one-time undulating stretches of green bushland of Malvern' (Art Portfolio Ltd 1911). Early settlers made use of a fresh water spring in High Street that inspired the naming of the Spring Gardens; in the 1880s this local water supply was encased in a rustic rockery and became an ornamental feature of the public gardens.

Like Prahran, Malvern was the name of a municipality as well as a suburb. The Shire of Malvern was established in 1876 from the earlier Gardiner Road District. In the 1870s the higher areas were taken up for gentlemen's estates, while small farmers, market gardeners and orchardists occupied the lower land near the Creek.

The railway attracted new settlers to the area and land was subdivided at a great rate through the boom years of the 1880s and early 1890s. Large areas of open paddocks and market gardens were rapidly transformed into pleasantly sited homes and gardens. Malvern in the 1880s epitomised the ideal suburb, providing a pleasant refuge for the affluent middle class, away from the bustle and noise of the city.

From its foundation Malvern was regarded as solidly respectable. This was reflected by a consistency in good quality homes, ranging from Victorian to interwar styles. The famed Gascoigne and Waverley estates, developed from 1885, were some of the most celebrated

subdivisions in the area. Housing was mostly detached and it was one of a group of new suburbs with a higher rate of home ownership compared to the older inner areas of Melbourne (Davison 1978: 181). Malvern was comfortably and solidly middle class. While there were several large mansions dating from the 1870s and 1880s, the suburb generally lacked the excessive wealth and flamboyance of Toorak. The north-west corner of Malvern, however, was comparable with Toorak in terms of elevation and grand homes. Here, on the east side of Glenferrie Road, John Wagner of Cobb & Co. erected the mansion 'Stonington' (1890). A short distance away was another mansion, 'Moorakyne' (1889). In 1901 'Stonington' became the official residence of the Governor of Victoria, after the newly appointed Governor-General took up residency in Melbourne's existing Government House in the Domain. This gave Malvern an added cachet of importance, and its residents valued proximity to wealth and influence.

Malvern was almost entirely residential, with major shopping strips established on Malvern Road and Glenferrie Road. There was barely any industry, though in 1879 there was a ropeworks and a tile factory (Whitworth 1879: 305). There was also a brickworks and clay pits near the corner of Elizabeth Street and Henderson Avenue. The population of Malvern was largely conservative and had a high rate of church attendance (McCalman 1995: 7).

Malvern's rapid rate of growth led to the Shire being replaced by the City of Malvern in 1911. The Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust had been established in Malvern the year before. Large estates continued to be subdivided in the early 1900s, and many streets in Malvern are lined with Edwardian-era houses.

Several private schools in Malvern operated from large Victorian mansions, including Malvern Grammar School and Sacre Couer, as well as many smaller short-lived schools. Later private schools, including the Catholic secondary schools De La Salle and Kildara, also adapted Victorian residences for their schools.

Place history

In the 1880s the Malvern district was experiencing rapid growth and suburban development, with many lured by the new railway connection. It was a sought-after area for the affluent middle-class, with many subdivisions offering allotments for villas and mansions. Winter Street was created as part of the Winter Estate, which was subdivided in 1885 (Subdivision Plan 1885).

The north side of Winter Street, between Glenferrie Road and Irving Street, was divided into six uniform-sized allotments, with one additional larger allotment on the corner of Irving and Winter streets. This was marked as lot 11 and would become the site of two residences: numbers 25 and 29 Winter Street (Figure 1). In 1890-1891 brothers W. & P. Brokensha, contractors and plasters, were rated as owners of the land at lot 11 (RB as cited in Foster n.d.). The Brokensha brothers erected several brick villas in Winter Street, and as owners of the lot it is most likely they also built 25 Winter Street. A newspaper advertisement of 1889 is presumed to relate to this group of houses, including 25 Winter Street: 'MALVERN, Winter-street, ... Beautiful new brick Villas, ten rooms, every convenience, £1400. Brokensha Bros' (*Age* 28 November 1889). 29 Winter Street was erected in 1892, and it is likely 25 Winter Street was erected at the same time, which is also when the house first appears in the directory (RB as cited in Foster n.d; S&Mc).

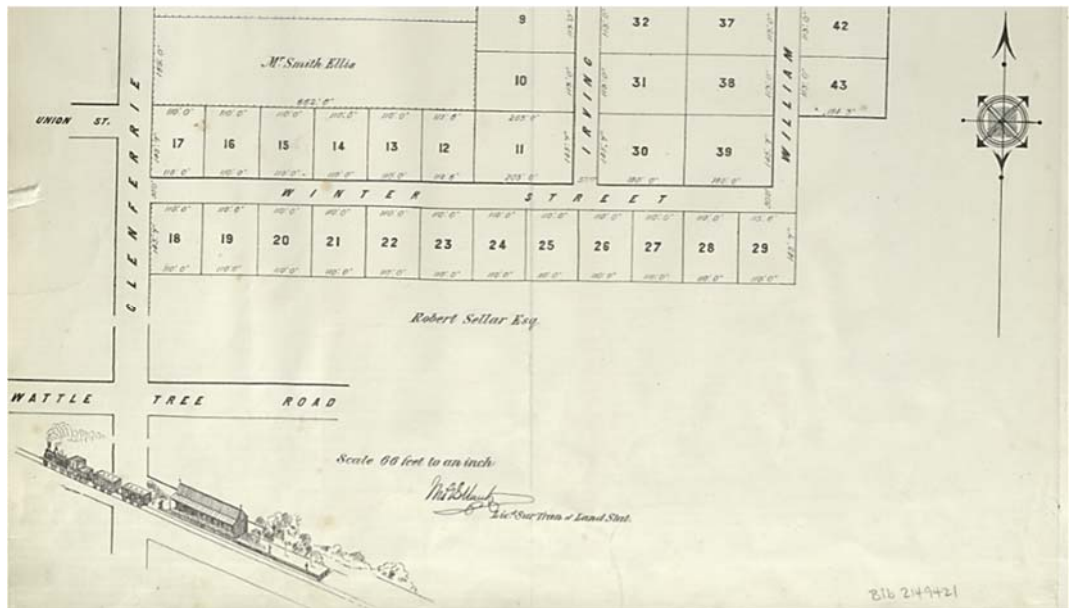


Figure 1. 'Winter Estate', subdivision plan, 1885 (source: SLV).

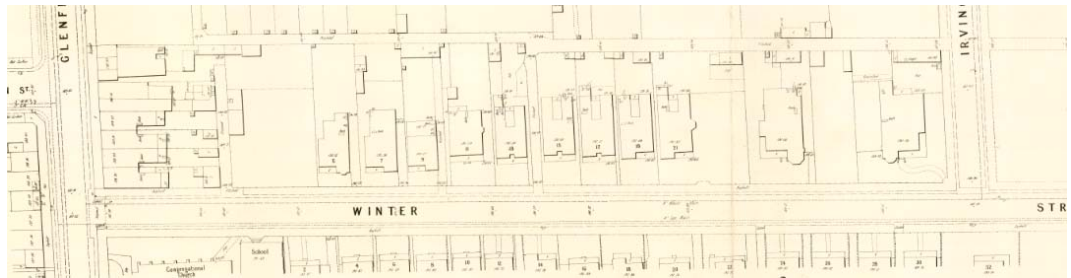


Figure 2. MMBW Detail Plan no. 1743, dated 1902 (source: SLV) showing villas constructed on the north side of Winter Street between Glenferrie Road and Irving Street by 1902.

The house at 25 Winter Street, as shown in the MMBW detail plan of 1902, was a substantial house with a front bay window and return verandah, and splayed entrance steps. An outbuilding at the rear was most likely stabling, but is not marked as such.

In 1893 and 1894 the owner of the newly completed 25 Winter Street was W.K. Thompson, gentlemen, rated for a brick house of 9 rooms (RB). Thompson and his family lived in the house for several years, during which time it was known as 'Laguna'.

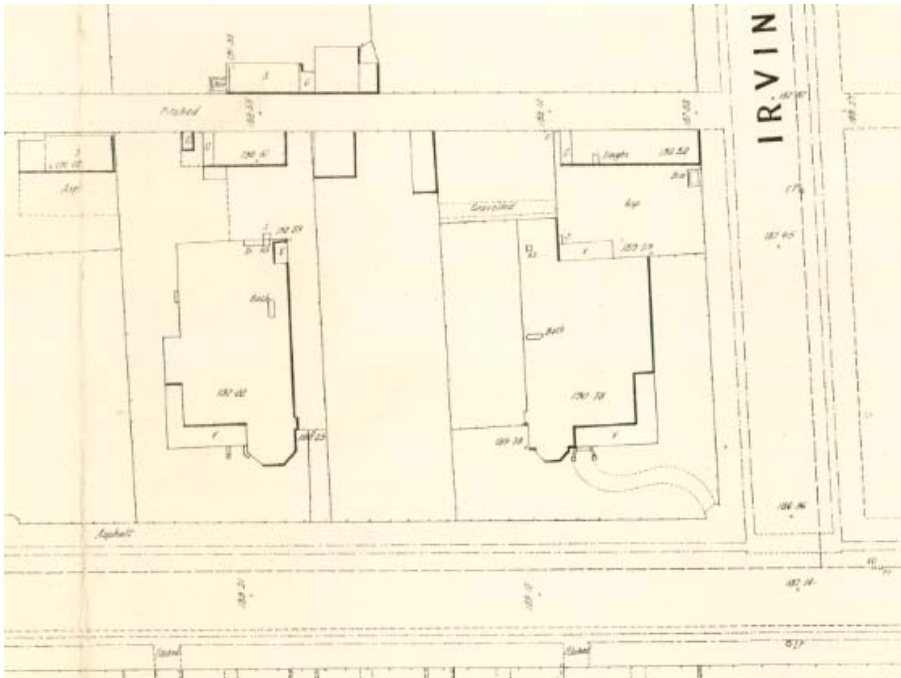


Figure 3. MMBW Detail Plan no. 1743, dated 1902 (source: SLV). No. 25 Winter Street is the building on the left.

By 1897 the house was owned by Alexander Morey, sharebroker, the son of the notable gold miner and civic leader, Edward Morey of Ballarat (McCallum 1995). Morey returned to Ballarat around 1908, and in 1910 Mr and Mrs Mitchell Kilgour Beveridge were the owners (RB). He was a brother of squatter Andrew Beveridge, who was known for his affray with Aboriginal people over stolen sheep in the Swan Hill district in 1846, which led to Andrew being speared to death (Hone 1969). Mitchell Kilgour Beveridge was the founder of the *Kilmore Advertiser* in 1873, and while living at 25 Winter Street (in 1911) published a historical piece on early settlement on the Lower Murray (Beveridge 1911: 27-29). In 1918, a party was held at 25 Winter Street, Malvern, to celebrate the Beveridges' fiftieth wedding anniversary (*Punch* 1918). Two years later, the house was auctioned. It was described at this time as a 'well built brick villa containing 9 Spacious Rooms and Usual Conveniences on Land 68 Ft x 135 Ft. Stables, Man's Room, &c.' (*Age* 14 February 1920).

Later owners included Mr and Mrs A. J. Cottee who were resident at 25 Winter Street in 1931, by which time it was known as 'Kurnell' (*Table Talk* 22 January 1931). Later in the 1930s the house was occupied by Dr and Mrs H. Claridge and family (*Table Talk* 29 July 1937).

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Physical description

The residence originally known as 'Laguna' at 25 Winter Street is a substantial single-storey Italianate villa that occupies a relatively wide allotment on the north side of Winter Street just west of the intersection with Irving Street in Malvern. The house addresses Winter Street and is largely concealed behind a high masonry front wall (unsympathetic) and established front garden. The property extends to the rear right-of-way that is accessed from Irving Street.



Figure 4. Front and side elevations of 25 Winter Street, Malvern showing elaborate bichrome brick patterning (source: Context 2016).

Constructed c1892, the building is a highly intact example of the single-storey asymmetrical Italianate villa type which is distinctive for its interesting bichrome brick patterning. The asymmetrical form became popular during the 1880s, and in this respect the house at 25 Winter Street (as well as its neighbour at no. 29) is a relatively typical, although large, suburban Italianate villa. The house has a projecting canted bay fronting Winter Street to one side of a return verandah. The verandah returns to a secondary rectangular projecting bay to the west. The hipped roof, which is clad in slate laid in a diamond pattern, is dominated by a number of large rendered chimneys with heavy cornices and decorative wythes.

The bichrome brick patterning is elaborate with cream brick dressings against dark Hawthorn brick walls used to emphasise window openings, quoining to external building corners, as a continuous band below the brick eaves brackets, and as continuous sill and lintel bands. Cream bricks are also used to highlight the continuous stringcourse of Hawthorn bricks around the building. The cream patterning to the building corners and openings creates a striking pattern to the canted bay. The chimneys retain an unpainted cement render finish.

The return verandah appears to be highly intact retaining the tessellated tiles laid within a bluestone nosing. The verandah is constructed in timber with turned timber posts and a chamfered verandah beam that supports high quality cast-iron lacework below. The cast-iron patterns utilise a range of shield and floral motifs to the integrated frieze and brackets. Windows beneath the verandah are generally full height double-hung sashes, with segmentally arched windows to the canted bay. The front door is located adjacent to the canted bay and probably retains an ornate timber surround with sidelights and a highlight.



Figure 5. Front elevation of canted bay as seen from Winter Street (source: Context 2016).

An aerial in 2016 shows that the footprint of the house is largely unchanged from its plan in the 1902 MMBW. The outbuilding shown in 1902, at the northern boundary, has been replaced by a larger garage.

Comparative analysis

As discussed in the Stonnington Thematic Environmental History, section 8.2.2, the suburban house on a garden allotment was an aspiration of many middle-class Victorians:

Davison (1978:145) describes the Victorian cult of the home in the fresh air and tranquillity of the suburbs as a haven from the noise and dirt of the city - the ideal of rus in urbe (country in the city) which, through Victoria's prosperity and the growth of the public transport system, became possible for many working people. For most suburbanites this home was a single-storey detached house surrounded by its own garden. On a visit to Australia in the 1880s, Twopeny (1883:37) noted that this was the almost universal preference of Australians. During the boom of the 1880s many people found their ideal piece of rus in urbe in the Malvern municipality. Here streets of Victorian villas rapidly began to replace market gardens, especially in the vicinity of the railway lines.

The detached house was the typical Victorian house form in the middle-ring suburbs, in areas where the new tram and train lines facilitated travel and allowed lower density development. In this spacious suburban environment, they could be set in large gardens with side setbacks allowing for a return verandah on one or two sides. They were also built in inner suburban areas for better-off residents, but were usually restricted in form with a front verandah only and side walls near the boundaries.

The architectural expression of these small to medium sized houses ranges from quite simple to those lushly embellished on par with much grander houses. In keeping with the dominant style of the Victorian era, most of small to medium detached houses in Stonnington are Italianate in style. The simplest ones have a symmetrical façade with the front door in the centre. Many have added visual interest created by a projecting bay to one side of the façade, and a cast-iron verandah to the other, creating the classic asymmetrical Italianate suburban form.

The Italianate style had its origins in the landscape paintings of Nicholas Poussin and Claude Lorraine 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 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 notes (in *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, 2012:357):

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.

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 an 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. Moving further east, nineteenth-century residential development began later, and hence there are fewer Italianate houses in the suburb of Malvern.

Examples of Italianate 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.

The most obvious comparison for the house at 25 Winter Street, Malvern are the other houses built by Brokensha Brothers along Winter Street, and in particular no. 29, which shares a similar form. Unlike 25 Winter Street, no. 29 is finished in cement render with a range of

elaborate applied ornamentation. The full effect of the return verandah at no. 29 is appreciated from frontages to both Winter and Irving streets.

More generally, 'Laguna' can be compared to other medium-sized Italianate villas that are Significant in the municipality, of which there are a relatively high number that adopt the typical asymmetrical Italianate plan form. Examples include more modest houses set on suburban allotments, including: 59 Northcote Road, Armadale (in HO130), 22 Donald Street, Prahran (in HO456), 71 Tivoli Road, South Yarra (in HO149), and 50 The Avenue, Windsor (in HO148). Those expressed with polychrome (or bichrome) brickwork include: 34 Northcote Road, Armadale (in HO130), 103 Kooyong Road, Armadale (in HO130), 14 Donald Street, Prahran (in HO456), 69 Greville Street, Prahran (in HO456), 5 Fawkner Street, South Yarra (in HO131), and 48 Davis Avenue, South Yarra (in HO150).

'Laguna' can be better compared to other larger examples built on more generous allotments which allowed for a return verandah, often terminating at a second projecting bay to the side elevation (as at 25 Winter Street). Examples include: 5 Royal Crescent, Armadale (in HO130), 11 Avondale Road, Armadale (in HO123), 860 Malvern Road, Armadale (in HO130), 46 Northcote Road, Armadale (in HO130), 15 Inverness Avenue (HO316), 34 Grandview Grove, Prahran (in HO135), 5 Wynnstay Road, Prahran (in HO135), 'Otira' at 56 The Avenue, Windsor (in HO148), and 46 The Avenue, Windsor (in HO148).

In comparison to the examples listed above, 25 Winter Street is closest in massing and form to the rendered villa at 11 Avondale Road, Armadale. This example also adopts typical asymmetrical Italianate planning with a return verandah set between projecting bays. Unlike 25 Winter Street however, the villa occupies a corner allotment and takes full advantage of the return verandah and perpendicular projecting bays to address both street frontages. The villa at 11 Avondale Road is highly intact despite a modest addition constructed to the rear of the dwelling. 11 Avondale Road utilises a range of cast and run cement render ornamentation to present an elaborate front façade, which at 25 Winter Street is alternatively achieved through elaborate bichrome brick patterning.



Figure 6. 11 Avondale Road, Armadale, individually significant in HO123 (source: Google Streetview).

25 Winter Street, Malvern compares well to the villas at 83 Caroline Street, South Yarra (in HO355) and 44 The Avenue, Windsor (in HO148) in relation to their bichrome brickwork patterning and intactness. These examples also utilise cream brick dressings against dark Hawthorn brick walls to emphasise the eaves and exterior corners of the walls, and in the case of 83 Caroline Street, also to highlight the corners of the tall chimneys. The elaborate brick patterning to the canted bay at 25 Winter Street is most similar to the effect achieved by the cream trim to both the large openings and building corners to the pair of projecting bays at 44 The Avenue, although the pattern is enlivened further by the splayed walls at Winter Street.

Furthermore, the use of cream bricks to highlight the lintel course, sill course and string course at 25 Winter Street adds further distinction to the brick expression.



Figure 7. 83 Caroline Street, South Yarra, individually significant in HO355 (source: Google Streetview).



Figure 8. 44 The Avenue, Windsor, individually significant in HO148 (source: Google Streetview).

In conclusion, the villa at 25 Winter Street, Malvern is a highly intact example of one of the municipality's collection of substantial single-storey Italianate villas. It is distinguished by its interesting bichrome brick patterning which is elaborate with cream brick dressings against dark Hawthorn brick walls used to emphasise window openings, quoining to external building corners, and as a continuous band below the brick eaves brackets. Cream bricks are also used as continuous sill and lintel courses and to highlight the continuous stringcourse of Hawthorn bricks encircling the building. The cream patterning to the building corners and openings creates a striking pattern to the canted bay.

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

8.1.1 Self-made men and landed gentry

The former 'Laguna' is of historical interest for its connection to Mitchell Kilgour Beveridge, founder of the *Kilmore Advertiser* in 1873 and a member of the Beveridge family who established Tyntynder station at Swan Hill; he was a brother of Peter Beveridge, author and pastoralist. In 1911, while living at 25 Winter Street, he published a historical piece on early settlement on the Lower Murray.

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 former 'Laguna', at 25 Winter Street, Malvern, is significant. It is likely the house was built in c1892 for gentleman, W. K. Thompson, by Brokensha Brothers (William and Phillip, contractors and plasterers) who were the owners of the lot in 1890-91 and also erected other brick villas in Winter Street. It was later owned and occupied by journalist Mitchell Kilgour Beveridge, founder of the *Kilmore Advertiser*, from c1910 to c1920.

It comprises a substantial single-storey Italianate villa of bichrome brick, constructed to an asymmetrical plan form with a timber return verandah set between two perpendicular projecting bays. The house is significant as viewed and appreciated from Winter Street, and is significant to the extent of its nineteenth century external form and fabric.

The modern masonry front fence and driveway are not significant.

How is it significant?

The villa at 25 Winter Street, Malvern, originally known as 'Laguna', is of local architectural and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Architecturally, the former 'Laguna' is a fine and highly intact representative example of a substantial Victorian Italianate villa built for middle-class residents of Malvern, of the sort that began to characterise the suburb in the 1880s and 1890s. It exhibits typical features of this type, including the asymmetrical plan form of a projecting canted bay to one side of a return verandah, a hipped roof clad in slate and rendered chimneys with heavy cornices. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, the former 'Laguna' is distinguished by its interesting bichrome brick patterning which is elaborate with cream brick dressings against dark Hawthorn brick walls used to emphasise window openings, quoining to external building corners, and as a continuous band below the brick eaves brackets. Cream bricks are also used as continuous sill and lintel courses and to highlight the continuous stringcourse of Hawthorn bricks encircling the building. The cream patterning to the building corners and openings creates a striking pattern to the canted bay and is also of note. The timber return verandah is highly intact retaining the tessellated tiles, bluestone nosing, turned timber posts and high quality cast-iron lacework. (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 9. Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 25 Winter Street, Malvern (source: www.land.vic.gov.au).

Recommended grading: A2