

'Pattenbringan'

7 Gawith Court, Toorak

Place type: Residential Buildings (private), Villa

Significance level: Local



Recommended protection: Planning Scheme

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

Locality history

Toorak is situated on the elevated south side of the Yarra River, with views across the river to the city of Melbourne. Toorak has played a key role in Melbourne's social and cultural history, and is regarded Australia-wide as a symbol of wealth and influence. It has long been recognised as Melbourne's most affluent suburb. Although it was elevation and topography that established Toorak as a fashionable address, its name in fact comes from an Aboriginal word for 'reedy swamp'.

The first Crown land sales south of the Yarra took place in the 1840s and 1850s. 'Toorak House', built by merchant James Jackson, along with its extensive grounds, was acquired by the newly established Victorian government in 1851 as Victoria's first Government House. The

creation of a vice-regal seat in 1851 set the tone for social exclusivity and was the foundation for Toorak's development as a desirable address.

As Melbourne developed and industrialised in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the wealthy middle-class – including merchants, industrialists, professional men, military men, politicians, and men and women of 'independent means' – sought to escape the bustle of the city and to settle in a quieter, more spacious environment. Paddocks and native bush gave way to large estates and substantial homes. The approach to Toorak was via the Gardiners Creek Road (later Toorak Road), which was the chief east–west route; the drive along it was described as 'very pleasant' in 1879 (Whitworth 1879: 390). Toorak was also accessed from the private punt at Grange Road that linked the two sides of the Yarra and also, from 1879, via the Oakleigh railway line.

During the 1870s and 1880s, many large mansions were erected, usually to an architect's plan. The scale and extravagances of these residences reached a peak during the land boom of the 1880s as merchants and others among Melbourne's expanding *nouveaux riches* sought a prestigious address. Toorak's mansions were often sumptuously and exquisitely decorated in the latest styles. Their owners could afford to 'go Home' to Britain, and to travel through Europe, and bring back art and other decorative pieces not easily obtainable in the colonies. Large estates also allowed for the establishment of impressive ornamental gardens, often incorporating a conservatory and a fernery, and these were often in keeping with prevailing good taste and in sympathy with the design of the house. In many cases, affluent property owners commissioned landscape designers.

At its height, from the 1870s and up until the dawn of the First World War, Toorak society represented an unusually high concentration of wealth, power and influence not seen elsewhere in Australia. This was home to many of Melbourne's wealthiest and most influential families, including the Baillieu, Clarke, Grimwade, Fairburn, Fink, Miller and Myer families. The salubrious environs of Toorak also provided a seasonal base in Melbourne for wealthy landed families (predominantly Western District graziers).

The population of Toorak was dominantly British and overwhelmingly Protestant. St John's Church of England was a lynchpin of Toorak social life in the Victorian era; it was the preferred venue for Society weddings and became a symbol of social aspiration. Other 'English' influences in the development of Toorak can be seen in the Tudor Revival style of a number of the interwar-era shopfronts along Toorak Road.

Some large estates were subdivided in the 1880s during the frenzied period of the property boom. Other parts of Toorak were developed with more typical middle-class homes of the Victorian and Edwardian eras. There was very minimal, if any, industry in Toorak proper, although many of its elevated homes had clear views across the Yarra of the factories with their chimney smoke that were concentrated on the Richmond flats.

Place history

The large villa residence known as 'Pattenbringan' (also 'Patten-bringan') was built in 1889-90 for Hugh Wilson in Heyington Place to a design by the notable Melbourne architectural firm, Reed, Henderson & Smart. Tenders were called in September 1889 for a residence at Toorak for H.T. Wilson (*Argus*, 28 September 1889). Hugh Wilson is listed in the 1889/90 City of Prahran rate books (dated 4 Nov. 1889) as the owner of vacant land. The following year, this changed to a nine-room brick house, a description that remained constant until the mid-twentieth century (RB).

The house was built on the elevated south bank of the Yarra, with views across the river to Richmond. It lies close to the railway line which was built in 1879. The name Pattenbringan comes from a placename in Aberdeenshire, Scotland – possibly the home county of Hugh Wilson.

The Melbourne architectural firm of Reed, Henderson & Smart operated from 1883 until 1890, succeeding the previous partnership (Reed and Barnes) of Joseph Reed (1822-1890) and Frederick Barnes (1822-1883). The firm continues today as Bates Smart. Reed and Barnes were responsible for a number of prominent and notable buildings in early Melbourne, including the

Melbourne Public Library (1854), Ripponlea (1868) and the highly acclaimed Melbourne Exhibition Building (1878). In addition, the firm undertook commissions for residential, ecclesiastical and commercial buildings in Melbourne and in many regional cities and country towns across Victoria. Anketell Henderson (1853-1923) and Francis Smart (c.1852-1907) both joined the practice in 1883, joining forces to continue the success and repute of this established practice. Reed, Henderson & Smart won a number of notable commissions. Within the City of Stonnington these included 'Bona Vista', South Yarra (1884); the mansion 'Redcourt' in Armadale (1887-88); and extensions to Christ Church, South Yarra, completed in the late 1880s (VHR H0635).

Hugh Thurburn Wilson was a notable figure, a successful banker, manager of the Union Bank of Australia. He emigrated to Victoria from Scotland around 1877 and had a successful banking career in Melbourne. He and his wife Annetta were amongst the exclusive list of invitees to the opening of the first Federal Parliament in Melbourne in 1901.

The MMBW Detail Plan no. 929, dated 1905, shows the substantial house and grounds of 'Pattenbrinagan' facing Heyington Place and beyond that the railway line and the Yarra River. The main entrance was on the south-east side of the house, accessed by a return verandah to the north-east and south-east sides. The paddock on the south side of the house block, marked with a 'manure box', possibly belonged to the house. The present-day Duffryn Place is the former lane behind this paddock and possibly marks the original boundary of 'Pattenbrinagan'.

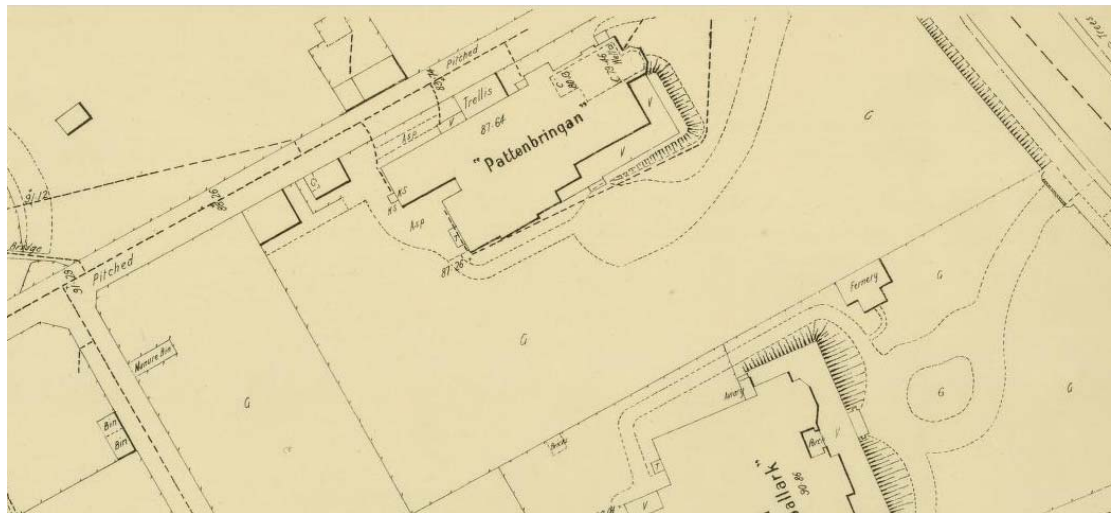


Figure 1. MMBW Detail Plan no. 929, City of Prahran, date 1905 (SLV)

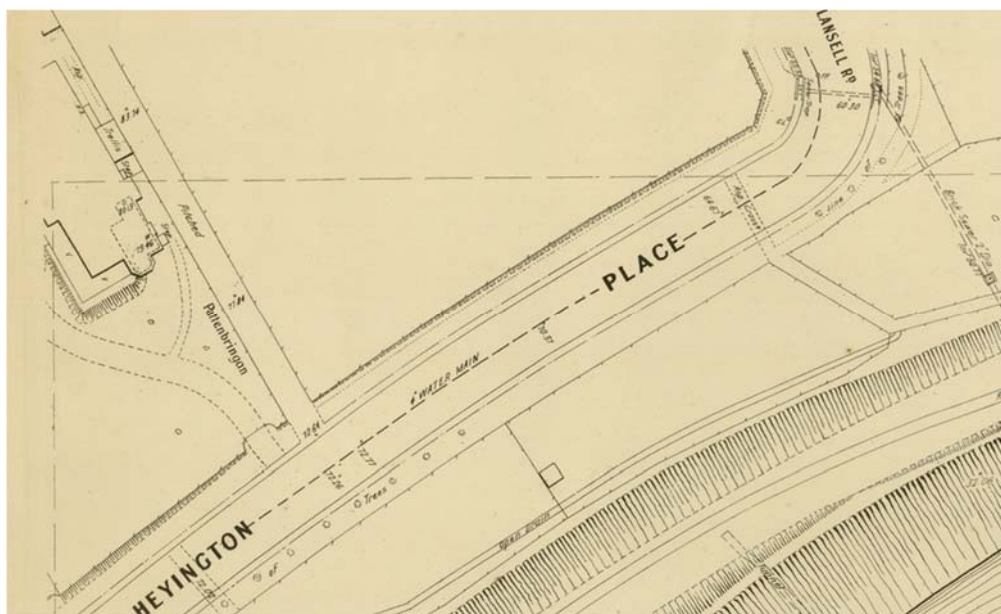


Figure 2. MMBW detail plan. No. 928, Richmond & Prahran, 1907 (SLV)

Wilson died in 1933 at home at 'Pattenbringan', aged 81. After his death, there was an executor's auction of the property. Wilson left no family as his wife Annetta and her adopted daughter had been lost at sea when the steamer *Waratah* sank in 1909 (*Argus* 1 July 1933).



Figure 3. Sale notice, *Argus*, 1933.

By 1949 the property was owned by Dr and Mrs Arthur Joyce. *The Argus* newspaper reported in 1949: 'The beautiful garden of Pattenbringan, the home of Dr and Mrs Arthur Joyce, in Heyington place, Toorak, made an ideal setting for the late afternoon party they gave on Saturday in perfect weather' (*Argus* 10 October 1949). In 1955, the substantial and significant art collection and furnishings of the house, which had been collected by the Joyces, were sold at auction (*Argus* 29 October 1955).

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Physical description

The sprawling house at 7 Gawith Court, Toorak, stands on a large block of land which has been much reduced from its original boundaries as shown on the 1905 MMBW plan. The property once stretched to Heyington Place and the main façade faces this direction (north-east). This elevation is now obscured by a two-storey contemporary dwelling at 57 Heyington Place which sits in its former front garden. The property is now accessed via Gawith Court on the south side, which was created on another part of the original extensive gardens.



Figure 4. 'Pattenbringan' viewed from the south-east (Source: *The Age*, 12 May 1979:40)

The walls of this single-storey house are finished with cement render and the complex roof is clad in slates. Chimneys are also rendered, with recessed vertical panels and modest run mouldings at the top and as a stringcourse. Most of the house sits beneath a high gabled-hipped roof with a long ridge. At the rear (south-west end), it terminates in a simple gable with a louvered vent. At its north-east end (the main façade) there is a lower projecting hip with a semi-hexagonal roof at its front (for a canted bay window).

A return verandah sits below the bracketed eaves of the front part of the house and stretches from this bay window around before terminating at a lower hipped roof extending from the rear half of the south-east elevation. This roof is punctuated by a projecting gable flanked by two tall chimneys. This gable has a decorative truss with a pierced timber sunburst pattern above it, and a turned pendant-finial. This is in contrast to the front gablet of the main roof which appears to have just a truss and pendant-finial and a large louvered vent.

The verandah roof is a hipped skillion clad in corrugated metal. It is supported on delicate turned timber posts. The verandah frieze and brackets have been removed, but their design is

indicated by remnant fretted timber elements between paired posts at the corner of the verandah.

The front door sits below the verandah at the junction with the lower hipped roof on the south-east side. It has six panels, with bolection mouldings, and a highlight window.

The visible windows are double-hung timber sashes. The upper sashes have a segmental arch and H-shaped glazing bars. There is a triangular pediment of moulded cement render on a cushion frieze which sits above two windows in the gable to the south-east elevation.

When the house was sold in 1979, there was a description of internal features including a large entrance hall with a carved wooden mantelpiece and stained glass windows, a coffered ceiling of stained timber in the dining room, and a 'small room with an arched ceiling' (*The Age*, 12 May 1979:40).



Figure 5. Front gates of 7 Gawith Court. (source: *Context*, 2016)

There is a fine set of wrought and cast-iron gates at the current vehicular entrance on Gawith Court. The heavy posts are of timber with cast-iron caps, and the gates incorporate delicate cast-iron work with an Aesthetic Movement influence. They are high quality gates that date from the nineteenth century, so may be the original 'Pattenbringan' gates, seen on the 1905 MMBW plan on Heyington Place, since relocated.

Alterations include the loss of the timber verandah frieze and brackets. Aerial photos show that there is a new rear wing which sits beneath a separate hipped roof at the south-west end of the house. The house sits behind a high timber paling fence which obscures views to much of it.

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 ridgescaping 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 Wattleree 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).

'Pattenbringan' can be compared to a number of the large houses and villas. The 1890 house at 15 Forster Avenue, Malvern East, designed by architect Sydney H Wilson, is another example of an early Queen Anne villa which retains the use of cement render to the walls. Similar to 'Pattenbringan' it also has a medieval influence to the projecting gabled bay, as well as a sunburst motif, popularised by the Aesthetic Movement, and retains a separate verandah roof form.



Figure 6. 15 Forster Avenue, Malvern East, of 1890 (HO310). (source: Marshall White, 2015)

Many of the finest early Queen Anne Revival houses in Stonnington were designed by architectural practice Reed, Henderson & Smart, as well as by its successor practice Reed, Smart & Tappin (after 1890). Their 'Redcourt' at 506 Orrong Road, of 1887-88, was the first known use in Australia of terracotta roofing tiles, a material that became such a distinctive feature of the style. Their 'Bona Vista' at 59 Kensington Road, of 1884, is distinguished by the novel use of a corner tower with conical roof suggesting a French Renaissance influence. Their 'Edzell' at 76 St Georges Road of 1891-92, one of Toorak's grandest mansions, with red brick walls, half-timbered gables and a tiled roof, incorporates elements of English Queen Anne Revival, Elizabethan and Old English styles (Lewis 2004:77-83 & VHR H691 place citation). The practice also built many important houses in the City of Boroondara.

In comparison with other Reed, Henderson & Smart houses of the 1880s, 'Pattenbringan' is unusual for the use of cement render to the walls, while other known examples are in face brick (usually red). This may be due to the clients' demands. Lewis (2004:77) notes that leading architects preferred not to use render from at least 1884, but some clients still demanded it. Its massing – with a dominant high gable-hipped roof – is also unusual for their designs at the time, which were gabled or hipped with projecting gables. Finally, the H-shaped variation on margin glazing to the sash windows is not seen elsewhere. The treatment of the side gable, however, is in keeping with other Reed, Henderson & Smart houses. The fretted sunburst pattern, for example, was also used for 'Homeden' of 1889 on Lansell Road, Toorak (demolished; see Lewis 2004:80), and the floating triangular pediment motif was also used on 'Urangeline' of 1883-84 at 349 Barkers Road, Kew. The timber fretwork of 'Homeden', with a pierce circle between the turned timber posts, also appears to be similar to 'Pattenbringan'.



Figure 7. 'Homeden' on Lansell Road, Toorak (demolished). Designed by Reed, Henderson & Smart, 1889. (source: Lewis 2004:80)

In conclusion, 'Pattenbringan' is a house that demonstrates the transition from the Italianate to the Queen Anne Revival. The canted bay window, cement-rendered walls and verandah set below the eaves were all common for Italianate houses of the 1880s. Its gable-hipped roof, timber verandah detail and medieval gable treatment all belong to the innovative design that Reed, Henderson & Smart were known for in the 1880s, when they carried out many prestigious commissions in the cities of Stonnington and Boroondara.

Thematic context

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

8.1.2 Seats of the mighty – Mansion estates in the nineteenth century

8.4.1 Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion

8.4.2 Functional, eccentric & theatrical - experimentation & innovation in architecture

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?

'Pattenbringan' at 7 Gawith Court, Toorak, is significant. It is a large, single-storey villa built in 1889-90 for Scottish banker Hugh Wilson and designed by notable Melbourne architectural firm, Reed, Henderson & Smart. The house originally fronted Heyington Place.

It is a long building with cement-rendered walls beneath a high slate-clad gable-hipped roof, with a projecting semi-hexagonal hipped roof bay to one side of the front façade and a gabled bay to the side façade, with a return verandah between them.

There is a fine set of wrought and cast-iron gates at the current vehicular entrance on Gawith Court. They may have been relocated from the original Heyington Place entrance, so would be significant.

The contemporary rear extension and the timber paling fence to Gawith Court are not significant.

How is it significant?

‘Pattenbringan’ is of local architectural, aesthetic and historical (associational) significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Architecturally, ‘Pattenbringan’ demonstrates the transition from the Italianate to the Queen Anne Revival in the form of a sprawling suburban villa. The canted bay window, cement-rendered walls and verandah set below the eaves were all common for Italianate houses of the 1880s. Its gable-hipped roof, timber verandah detail and medieval gable treatment all belong to the innovative design that Reed, Henderson & Smart were known for in the 1880s, when they carried out many prestigious commissions in the cities of Stonnington and Boroondara. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, ‘Pattenbringan’ is particularly distinguished by the decorative treatment of the side gable, with a decorative truss with a pierced timber sunburst pattern above it and a turned pendant-finial, as well as a floating triangular pediment. The H-shaped margin glazing to the sash windows is also a very unusual feature. The cast and wrought-iron entrance gates are also of aesthetic significance for the high quality of their fabrication and the Aesthetic Movement influence of their design. (Criterion E)

It is also significant for its association with the Melbourne architectural firm of Reed, Henderson & Smart. It is an extremely long-lived and influential practice, beginning with the practice of Reed & Barnes in 1853 and still in existence today as Bates Smart. The practice was an important innovator in the introduction to and creation of the Queen Anne Revival style in Victoria from the early 1880s. ‘Pattenbringan’ illustrates another side of their work during the 1880s with unusual features including the rendered walls (as opposed to the more common red brick) and the sprawling bungalow form with its uncommon gable-hipped roof. (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: Fence controls – Cast and wrought-iron front gates

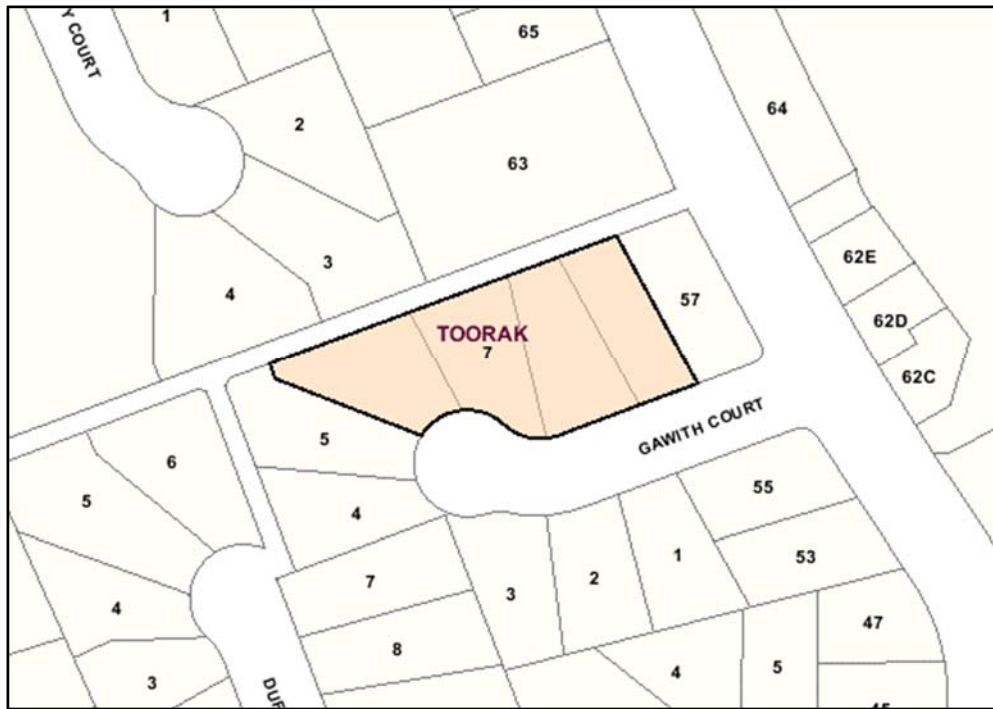


Figure 8: Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 7 Gawith Court, Toorak (source: www.land.vic.au)

Recommended grading: A2