

MOOORAKYNE AND STONINGTON PRECINCT MALVERN

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd in association with Di Foster, historian, in support of an amendment to the Stonnington Planning Scheme that will create an urban conservation area centred on the streets around the historic mansion, *Stonington*, in Malvern. The report builds on work carried out by Nigel Lewis Richard Aitken Pty Ltd in association with the Malvern Historical Society for the *City of Malvern Heritage Study*, 1992.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the area be protected as an Urban Conservation Area under the Stonnington Planning Scheme and be nominated to the Register of the National Estate.

EXTENT OF URBAN CONSERVATION AREA

The extent of the Urban Conservation Area is shown in the Heritage Overlay – HO182 - to the Stonnington Planning Scheme (Maps 3HO and 6HO).

HISTORY

GLENFERRIE ROAD EAST SIDE

Development of the area bounded by Glenferrie Road, Somers Avenue, the line of Henderson Avenue and Toorak Road, focussed on the subdivision of a number of significant mansion estates. William Philpott's Rosehill, at the corner of Toorak Road, set the pattern for development when the estate was subdivided in 1888, creating Chesterfield Avenue and Mayfield Avenue. To the south, the subdivision of Kooringa, Moorakyne and Stonington, created streets with elevated sites, where distinctive architect designed houses were built during the inter-war period. It is the development of these three mansion allotments that forms the basis of the area under discussion.

LAND SALES

Crown allotment 24, bounded by Malvern Road, Glenferrie Road, Toorak Road and the line of Henderson Avenue, was sold at the second sale of Crown land in 1849. The land included 72 acres and was purchased by Robert Anstruther Balbirnie for £108.¹ Balbirnie came to Melbourne in 1839 and purchased 20 acres of land in Toorak east of Williams Road, where he built his home Balmerino. In 1845 he applied to operate a punt on the Yarra at Swanston Street but the following year he became lessee and toll collector of the new timber bridge.²

In 1850 Balbirnie subdivided lot 24 into large allotments. Three of these allotments were sold to Peter Cousin and his son James. Peter Cousin purchased his allotment in 1851 and James Cousin purchased the adjacent allotments in 1859. Market gardener George Wratten purchased the fourth allotment which is now sited between Hamilton Road and Mayfield Avenue. The ten acre allotment at the corner of Toorak Road became the site of William Phillpot's estate Rosehill.³

The allotment extending to the corner of Malvern Road was subdivided into smaller lots and sold to various purchasers. Most of these small allotments became the property of William Woodmason in the 1860s.⁴ The Woodmason family were successful market gardeners and dairy farmers, with substantial land holdings throughout the district. At the corner of Glenferrie Road, Woodmason cultivated a highly successful market garden.⁵ He was Shire President and a long serving member of the Malvern Council. On his death in 1892, his son, William James Woodmason, took over the dairy and his father's prize

¹ Rob Bower, 'Malvern, a history of the subdivision, 1840-1989' plan 2, unpublished, Malvern Archives.

² Leslie Schumer, 'Malvern pioneers' unpublished manuscript, 1979, Malvern Archives.

³ Bower, loc cit.

⁴ Bower, loc cit.

⁵ *Victoria and its Metropolis*, Vol. 2, (Melbourne 1888) p.699.

winning jersey herd. Woodmason became a breeder of pure breed jersey cattle and the herd was noted as one of the best in Victoria, winning several championships at the Royal Melbourne Show.⁶ Woodmason's Melrose Dairy was established at the corner of Glenferrie and Malvern Roads.

KOORINGA

George Wratten and the Cousin family used their land as market garden and orchard. In 1881 Wratten sold his land to merchant Robert Harper who built a five-room brick house with stables, orchard and market garden, with an entrance from Glenferrie Road. Within a year the property was sold to pastoralist Suetonius Henry Officer. It appears that Officer died in 1883 and the property was then occupied by Robert Officer, presumably Sir Robert, the father of Suetonius. On the site, an imposing mansion was built to the design of noted architect Francis Maloney White, for Mrs S.H. Officer. By 1885 Mary Officer is rated as the owner of 13 acres with a brick house of 30 rooms. The Officer family owned the estate until 1890 when it was sold to landboomer, Joseph Bartlett Davies, who named the house Glenbervie. From 1895 to 1901, Davies leased the property to George Stevenson, one of the pioneers in the soft-goods trade in Australia. The house was then known as Malvern House.⁷

In 1907 Davies sold the property to pastoralist and racehorse breeder, Alexander Creswick who renamed the property Yarrien. The Creswicks lived at Yarrien until 1918 when the property was sold to sisters, Isabel and Robina Hamilton. At that time Isabel was Principal and Robina a teacher, at Toorak College located in Douglas Street Toorak. A third sister Barbara was superintendent of the boarding house. It was decided that the grounds at Douglas Street were too small, and in 1919 the school relocated to Yarrien in Glenferrie Road. Yarrien was used to accommodate the boarders and as the private quarters of the Hamilton sisters. By 1920, a hockey field extended along the Glenferrie Road frontage.⁸ It appears that within a few years, Essington Lewis, chairman of BHP., purchased Yarrien for use as a private home and renamed the property Kooringa.

In 1925 part of the estate, along with part of the adjacent Moorakynne estate, was subdivided into twenty-eight residential allotments with frontages to the east side of Wilks Avenue, Henderson Avenue and the corner of Beamsley Street.⁹ The College and Moorakynne Heights Estate was auctioned in November 1925 and advertised as being:

Situate[d] on the crest of the Malvern Heights, commanding extensive picturesque views of the distant Dandenong Ranges and intervening valleys. This elevated locality was selected ... as the ideal residential position, and consequently was built upon by such well-known real estate authorities as Sir

⁶ *Who's Who*, 1927, p.891; Woodmason, family history file, Malvern Archives

⁷ Anne Jackson, *Mayfield Centre: A Short History*, (Melbourne 1988).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Henderson Avenue & Wilks Avenue, LP12105, 20 July 1927; LP12365 10 February 1928.

John Grice, Messrs. Officer, Wagner and Davies. ... and it is the subdivision of parts of these famous homes that throws open to the public these elevated and select allotments.¹⁰

At the same time, Hamilton Road was also created, dividing the estate from Glenferrie Road to Wilks Avenue.¹¹ Toorak College relocated to Lansell Road and Kooringa was retained on a reduced allotment on the north side of Hamilton Road. In 1942, when Essington Lewis still owned Kooringa, the mansion was occupied by Wesley College, when the school's St Kilda Road buildings were taken over by the army.¹² Later, Kooringa became the Lady Dugan Red Cross Home. The mansion was finally demolished in the 1970s and became the site of Hamilton Close.

MOORAKYNE

The allotment owned by James Cousin changed hands several times, until it was purchased by Joseph Davies in 1878. The land was finally sold to merchant John Grice, who commissioned London-born architect Charles D'Ebro to design a mansion of grand proportions with a frontage to Glenferrie Road. In 1889 builder Stephen Armstrong was awarded D'Ebro's tender to build the mansion at a cost of £18,888.¹³ Grice named the house Moorakyne.

John Grice had been admitted to the bar in 1872, but joined his family's firm of Grice, Sumner & Co. He joined the National Bank in 1887 and became its Chairman in 1906. Grice was Chairman of Directors for many major Australian companies and became vice Chancellor of the University of Melbourne in 1918. His services to the war effort earned him a knighthood in 1917.¹⁴

In 1901 Grice sold Moorakyne to Anthony Edwin Bowes Kelly. Kelly had been living with his family at Waiora in Glenferrie Road since 1888. Bowes Kelly made his first fortune as a shareholder in BHP, and his second in the Mount Lyell copper mine in Tasmania. For at least four decades Bowes Kelly enhanced Australian mining and manufacturing. He was a director of BHP, for 45 years, a director of several banks and companies and a member of Malvern Shire Council, 1892-96.¹⁵

¹⁰ College and Moorakyne Heights Estate, subdivision plan 28 November 1925, Alway Collection, Malvern Archives

¹¹ Lodged plan, 12105.

¹² Geoffrey Blainey, *The Steel Master: A Life of Essington Lewis*, (South Melbourne 1971), p.168.

¹³ *Australian Building and Mining Journal*, December 1889.

¹⁴ *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 9, pp.105-6.

¹⁵ *ADB*, vol. 9, pp.552-3.

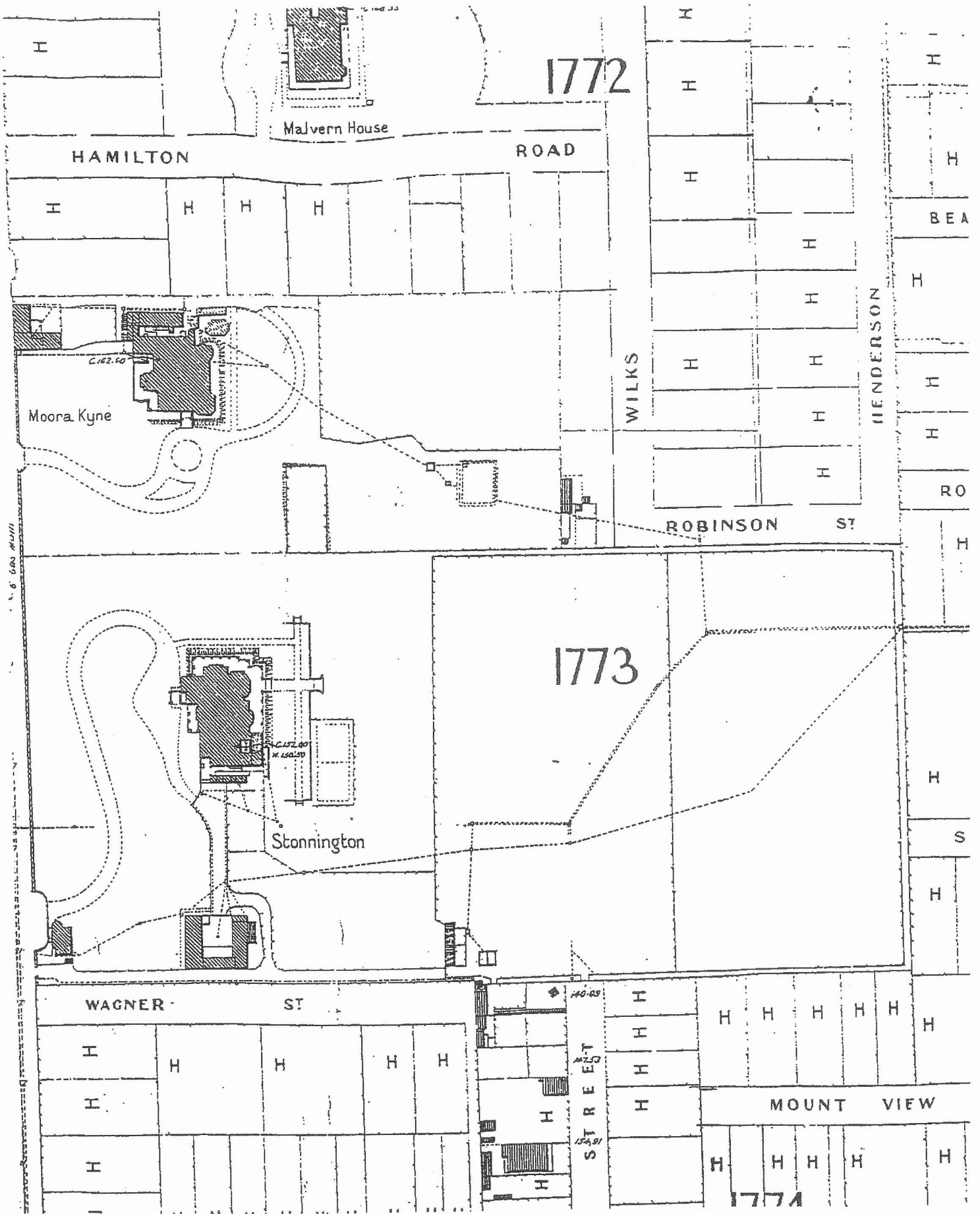


Illustration 1

MMBW detail plan, c. 1930, showing Malvern House, Moorakyne and Stonington.

In 1930, five years after part of the Moorakyne estate had been sold and subdivided to form Wilks Avenue, Kelly died. The family lived at Moorakyne until a decision was made to sell the estate. By 1932 no buyer could be found and the estate was subdivided into twenty residential allotments and Moorakyne Avenue was created, with a bend in the road to allow retention of the mansion.¹⁶ In December 1932, the Moorakyne Estate was advertised as:

‘one of the finest in the district, gently sloping towards the east, commanding extensive views from many points to the mountains’.¹⁷

In July 1933, the *Argus* noted that the -

Moorakyne Estate ... was placed on the market only a few months ago, yet already half a dozen houses have been started. Leading Melbourne architects designed most of them and when complete they should form a most interesting group example of modern domestic architecture.¹⁸

Moorakyne, which was retained on lot 3 of the estate, on the north side of Moorakyne Avenue, was described as ‘one of the finest in the State, ... of noble design ... with ornamental cement finish’. Despite the successful sale of the allotments, the mansion remained unsold and in April 1936 the building was demolished.¹⁹

STONINGTON

Peter Cousin had purchased 20 acres of Balbirnie’s land in Glenferrie Road in 1851, two years after his arrival from Scotland. The land was divided between his wife and his sons, Peter and James. By 1882 ‘fruiterer’ Peter Cousin was the owner of a six-roomed weatherboard house with ‘orchard, garden and paddock over nine acres on Malvern Hill’.²⁰ In that year, Cousin provided accommodation for Major James Barker, the Territorial Commander of the Salvation Army, and his wife Alice. During their nine month stay in Malvern many prayer meetings were conducted in Cousin’s barn, the ‘Hallelujah barn’, as it came to be called in early issues of the Salvation Army paper *War Cry*. The Cousin property was also the site of the commissioning of the first Australian Salvation Army Officer.²¹

In June 1886, Peter Cousin sold his property was sold to John Wagner, a founding partner with AW. Robertson in the Victorian branch of Cobb and Co. Wagner had gained his wealth in carrying, gold mining, manufacturing and real estate. Wagner commissioned leading architect, Charles D’Ebro, the

¹⁶ LP13668, 19 December 1932.

¹⁷ Moorakyne subdivision plan and sale notice, 3 December 1932, Alway collection, Malvern Archives.

¹⁸ *Argus*, 13 July, 1933, p.5.

¹⁹ *Sun*, 28 April, 1936.

²⁰ Morna Sturrock, *Stonington; A Centenary History*, (Burwood, 1990), p.6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.8.

same architect Grice had chosen for Moorakyne, and in 1890 an imposing mansion of 40 rooms was built by the same builder, Stephen Armstrong. The residence was named Stonington, after Stonington Connecticut, in the USA., the birthplace of Wagner's wife Mary. John Wagner lived with his family at Stonington until his death in 1901. The Wagner estate consisted of the mansion, stables and gatehouse, all of which survive today. The long curved driveway led from the massive iron gates, down to the porte-cochere, where carriages stopped.²²

When the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia was located in Melbourne, the Governor-General resided in the State Government House. Following John Wagner's death, Stonington became the Vice-Regal residence for the Governor of Victoria. Between 1901 and 1931 seven governors - Sir Arthur Sydenham Clarke, Sir Reginald Talbot, Sir Thomas Gibson Carmichael, Sir John Fuller, Sir Arthur Lyulph Stanley, George Edward Rous - Earl of Stradbroke - and Arthur Herbert Tennyson - Lord Somers - occupied Stonington.

Following the departure of the last Governor in 1931, Stonington's long association with education began. St Margaret's School used the property until 1938, when the school moved to Berwick. For the next few years, the mansion was used as an after-care centre for infantile paralysis patients and following the outbreak of the Second World War, Stonington was used as a convalescent hospital for the Australian Red Cross Society. From 1953-1956, the Health Department occupied the site as an administrative centre. Since 1957, Stonington has played an important role in Tertiary Education in Victoria. It was the home of the Toorak Teachers' College from 1957 to 1973 and the State College of Victoria, Toorak Campus from 1973 to 1992. Since 1992, Deakin University has occupied the site.

During St Margaret's occupancy of Stonington, land surrounding the mansion was subdivided. In April 1935, a sale was held of the Stonington Fields Estate, when twenty-six 'choice residential lots' were created in an extension of Wilks Avenue, the south side of Robinson Street and in the present Somers Avenue.²³ The western end of Somers Avenue (named for Lord Somers) had been created in 1913, and was originally called State Street, then Wagner Street.²⁴

East of Glenferrie Road, on the Kooringa, Moorakyne and Stonington estates, development during the interwar period resulted in many distinctive homes built by leading architects. Elevated allotments with views looking east, were created in the new streets, attracting purchasers expecting the latest in design.

²² Ibid., p.18.

²³ Stonington Fields estate, 6 April, 1935. Always Collection, Malvern Archives. Somers Avenue, Wilks Avenue, LP13883, 11 January 1935

²⁴ Somers Avenue, LPLP5983, 7 December 1913, LP6112, 7 July, 1913.

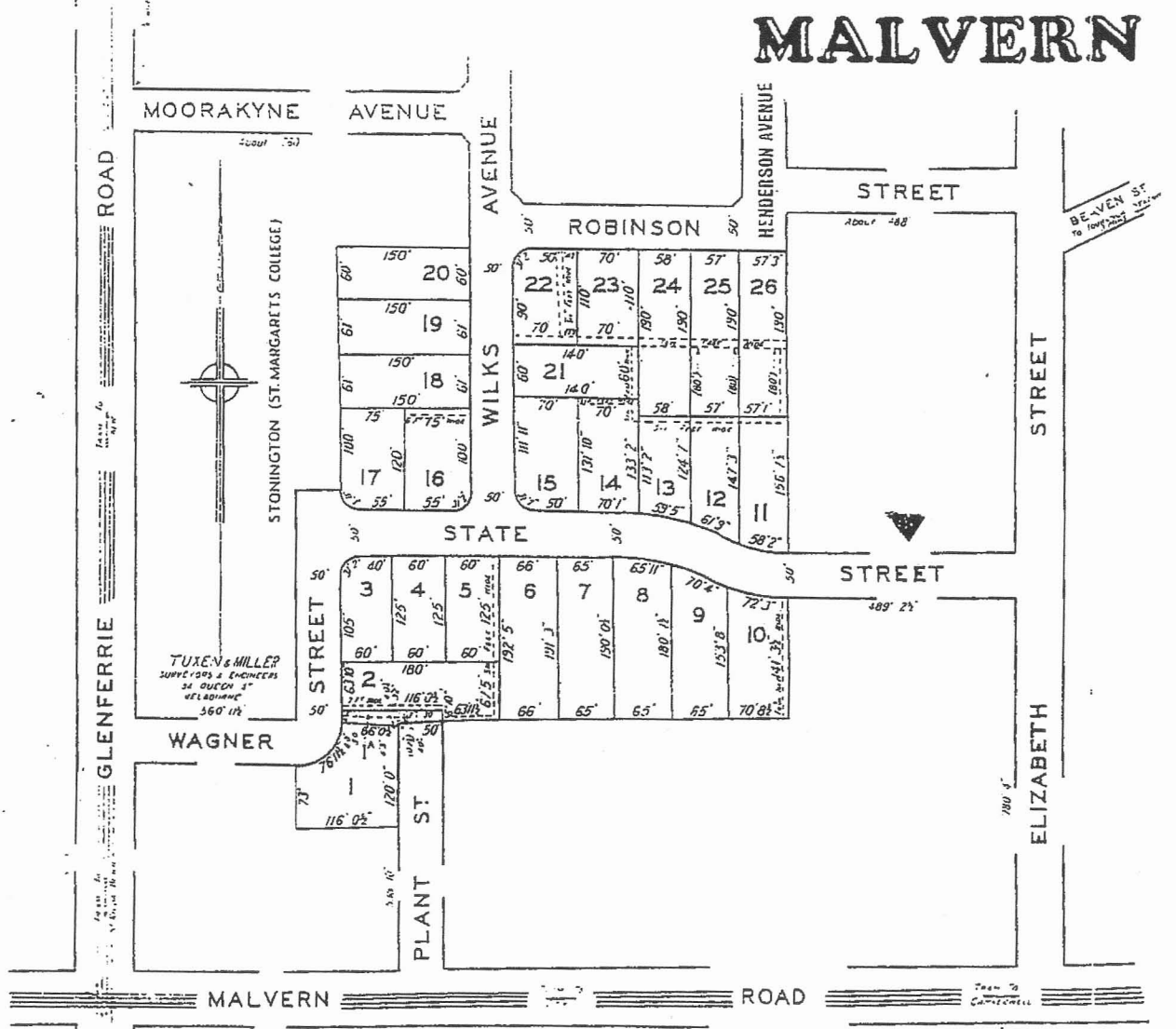


Illustration 2 'Stonington Fields Estate, Malvern', auction notice, 6 April 1935 (detail).

DESCRIPTION

The heritage precinct is in an area along the eastern side of Glenferrie Road that was once occupied by grand estates. The area now comprises a number of streetscapes, unified by their primarily interwar residential stock, their substantial street trees and gardens and, in several instances, their concrete roads.

Glenferrie Road itself is a busy urban thoroughfare with tram tracks, overhead power lines and modern street lighting. It nonetheless retains some of its nineteenth century character. A principal focus of this streetscape is *Stonington*, the last remaining mansion in the area and one of the last of Melbourne's city mansion properties. Its iron picket fence and expansive grounds are prominent along this section of Glenferrie Road. The nineteenth century character is reinforced by remnant mature vegetation, some of which survives from the gardens of *Stonington*, *Moorakyne* and *Hamilton House*. The architectural richness of this thoroughfare is heightened by the presence of a range of buildings designed by Melbourne's leading architects through the 1920s. These buildings demonstrate a diversity of character and a range of stylistic modes. The most notable residence from this period located within the precinct is *Katanga* at 372 Glenferrie Road by Harold Desbrowe Annear, executed in a restrained Georgian Revival mode. The architectural standard of the area is high and enhanced by the integrity of the building stock. There are few intrusive developments and only a handful of modern fences.

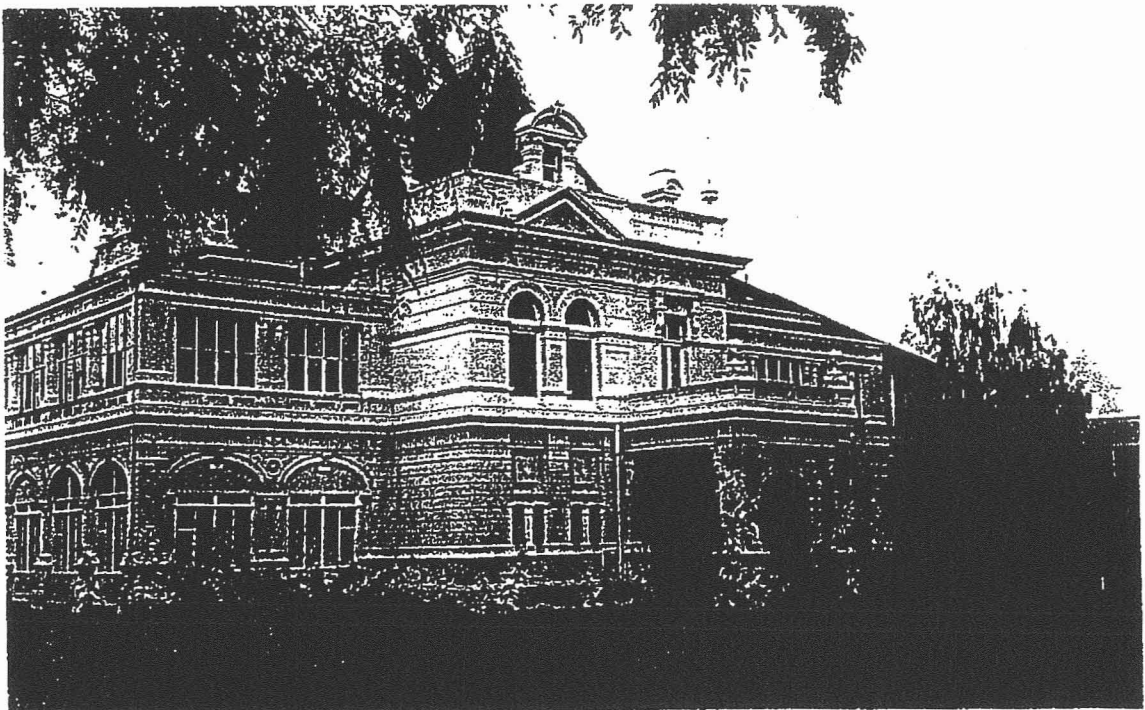


Illustration 3

Stonington, 1999.

To the east of Glenferrie Road the housing stock is younger and the scale more modest. The low traffic volumes in combination with the established gardens, mature street trees and narrow, gently undulating concrete roads (which date from the original subdivision), create a range of tranquil streetscapes. Building stock varies from street to street. Moorakynne Avenue takes its inspiration from Old English sources and is generally consistent in terms of building form and setbacks. Hamilton Road is similar in many respects to Moorakynne Avenue although much of the early building stock on the north side of the street has been replaced in recent years with cluster housing. In Wilks Avenue the Georgian Revival style is represented and the housing is generally more imposing than in surrounding streets. This is due, in part, to the number of noted architects who contributed designs to the street. These include J.F.W. Ballantyne (who designed No 11 and his own home at No 10), Arthur and Hugh Peck (No 8) and Charles Neville Hollinshed (No 12). Marcus Martin is reputed to have designed No 15. At the eastern edge of the heritage precinct, higher ground and larger setbacks combine to create a more open character. Henderson Avenue and the western part of Robinson Street still draw upon Old English sources. Represented in Henderson Avenue are designs by architects such as Cowper, Murphy and Appleford (No 3) and Robert Hamilton (No 9) but these are interspersed occasionally with Georgian Revival residences such as the streamlined clinker brick dwelling at No 23 by Barney & Kemp.



Illustration 4

Katanga, 372 Glenferrie Road, 1999.

ANALYSIS

The Moorakyne area is significant both for its links to the three former mansion estates, Kooringa, Moorakyne and Stonington and for the quality of subsequent subdivisions.

The former mansion estates played a major role in the development of the state, not simply as the engine rooms of Victorian industry and commerce but as the source of a range of local tastes and attitudes. Kooringa and Moorakyne no longer exist, but their memory is clearly legible in the extant trees and unusual subdivision patterns of their former extensive grounds. Today, the area is dominated by Stonington which remains one of Victoria's most significant buildings and a landmark in Glenferrie Road. The mansions and their legacy, promote associations with high profile pastoralists, politicians and businessmen, in particular Sir John Grice, Bowes Kelly, Alexander Creswick, the Officer family and John Wagner.

The presence of these mansions was central to the development of the character of the surrounding streets and in imparting a cachet to the area which would influence the nature and quality of subsequent building. During the interwar period, a second generation of Melbourne's leading figures was attracted to the area and with them, some of the city's leading architectural figures. Extant building stock from the period includes the work of Harold Desbrowe Annear, Schreiber & Jorgensen, Walter Mason, Cowper, Murphy & Appleford, JFW Ballantyne, Arthur & Hugh Peck and Charles Neville Hollinshed.

Beyond this, the area has a distinctive and highly valued character arising from its built form setting, with undulating streets paved for the most part in concrete, and well established street trees. In addition, there is a marked feeling of density to the residential development, with large two storey houses typical to the area. The quality and density of the housing and the consistent and distinctive character of the streets combine to make this area stand out from other twentieth century subdivisions within the municipality, and rank it as one of the finer Victorian estate subdivisions with interwar building stock in the general metropolitan area.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Moorakynne / Stonington heritage area represents a particular era of domestic residential development and is of significance for the integrity and cohesiveness of the era's architecture and streetscape character.

Developed on subdivisions of the three substantial mansion estates of Koorringa, Moorakynne and Stonington – the latter the only surviving mansion, the area is notable for the consistency of its residential building stock in terms of period, scale and quality. The majority of houses date from the 1930s and a smaller proportion from the 1940s and early 1950s, and most share similar characteristics in terms of a broad architectural revivalism, occasionally tempered by modernism.

The streetscape character is important for the fine quality of the streets of the area, with their predominantly concrete construction and dense foliage, and for the undulating topography of the setting. Each of these contributes to the heritage significance and individual character of this distinctive area.

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Subdivision Plans

College and Moorakynne Heights Estate, subdivision plan 28 November 1925, Alway Collection,
Malvern Archives

Moorakynne Estate subdivision plan, 3 December 1932, Alway collection, Malvern Archives.

Stonington Fields Estate, subdivision plan, 6 April, 1935. Alway Collection, Malvern Archives.

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APPENDIX

**SCHEDULE OF BUILDINGS, DESCRIPTIONS AND
RECOMMENDED GRADINGS**

BEAMSLEY STREET

<i>Street No.</i>	<i>Grading</i>	
North Side		
1	-	Double storey modern villa

GLENFERRIE ROAD

<i>Street No.</i>	<i>Grading</i>	
East Side		
336	A1	Toorak Campus of Victoria College. Includes Stonington. (HO40)
356	B	Grendon. Double storey interwar flats.
358	B	Elvada. Double storey interwar flats.
<i>- Moorakyne Avenue -</i>		
362	B	Double storey interwar flats.
364/366	B	Double storey interwar flats.
368	B	Double storey interwar villa.
370	B	Single storey interwar villa.
<i>- Hamilton Avenue -</i>		
372	A1	Double storey interwar villa. (HO41)
374	B	Double storey interwar villa.
376	B	Double storey interwar villa.
378	B	Interwar villa with attic storey.

HAMILTON ROAD

<i>Street No.</i>	<i>Grading</i>	
North Side		
1	-	Eleven modern cluster residences. Single and double storey.
9	-	Seven modern cluster residences. Single and double storey.
19	C	Double storey villa.
21	C	Double storey villa.
South Side		
2	B	Double storey interwar villa.
4	B	Allawah. Double storey interwar villa.
6-8	B	Double storey interwar villa.
10	B	Turoa. Double storey interwar villa.
14	B	1950s villa.
16	B	Double storey villa.

HENDERSON AVENUE

<i>Street No.</i>	<i>Grading</i>	
West Side		
1	B	Single storey interwar villa.
3	B	Double storey interwar villa.
7	B	Double storey interwar villa.
9	B	Double storey interwar villa.
11	B	Double storey interwar villa.
15	B	Double storey interwar villa.
17	B/C	Double storey interwar villa.
19	B	Double storey interwar villa.
21	B	Double storey interwar villa.
23	B	Double storey interwar villa.
25	-	Double storey modern villa.
East Side		
2	B	Single storey villa.
4/6	C	Interwar houses with attic storey. Semi detached.
6A	C	Double storey interwar villa.
<i>- Beamsley Street -</i>		
1/8	-	Double storey modern villa.
8B	C	Single storey interwar bungalow at rear of No 8.
10	-	Modern house.
12	B	Double storey interwar villa.
14	B	Double storey interwar villa.

MOORAKYNE AVENUE

<i>Street No.</i>	<i>Grading</i>	
North Side		
1	B	Double storey interwar flats.
3	B	Double storey interwar flats.
5	B	Double storey interwar flats.
7-9	-	Double storey modern villa.
11	B	Interwar villa.
13	B	Double storey interwar villa.
15	B	Double storey interwar villa.
17	B	Double storey interwar villa.
South Side		
2	B	Double storey interwar villa.
4	C	Single storey interwar villa. Extensively modified.
6	B	Double storey interwar villa.
10	B	Double storey interwar villa.
12-14	B	Double storey interwar villa with visible additions.

ROBINSON STREET

<i>Street No.</i>	<i>Grading</i>	
South Side		
14	C	Single storey interwar villa.
16	B	Double storey interwar villa.
18	B	Double storey interwar villa.
20-22	B	Double storey interwar villa.
24/26	B	Double storey interwar residences. Semi detached.

SOMERS AVENUE

<i>Street No.</i>	<i>Grading</i>	
North Side		
23	C	Double storey villa.
25	C	Loch Sloy. Double storey villa.
- Wilks Street -		
27	B	Double storey interwar villa.
South Side		
16	B	Double storey interwar villa. (HO334)
18	B	Double storey interwar villa.
20	B	Double storey interwar villa.
22	C	Double storey interwar villa.
24	C	Double storey interwar villa.

WILKS AVENUE

<i>Street No.</i>	<i>Grading</i>	
West Side		
1	B	Double storey interwar villa.
3-5	B	Double storey interwar villa.
7	B	Double storey interwar villa.
9	B	Double storey interwar villa.
11	B	Interwar villa with basement parking.
- Moorakyne Avenue -		
13	B	Double storey interwar villa.
15	B	Double storey interwar villa.
East Side		
2A/2B/2C/2D	B	Interwar residences, one and two storey.
<i>Robinson Street</i>		
2	B	Double storey interwar villa.
4	B	Double storey interwar villa.
6	B	Double storey interwar villa.
8	B	Double storey interwar villa.
10	B	Double storey interwar villa.
12	B	Double storey interwar villa.