

**3 ('The Briars') & 5 Avondale Road, Armadale**

Place type: Residential Buildings (private), Villas, Stables

Significance level: Local



*Villas at 3 (left) and 5 (right) Avondale Road.*



*Stables at 3 Avondale Road, viewed from Hampden Road.*

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

From the early 1850s this land was part of a larger area defined as Crown Allotment 52 in the Parish of Prahran. The area was sparsely settled in the 1850s, according to the plan of Melbourne by James Kearney (Kearney 1855). In c.1881, much of the land in the immediate vicinity of the subject properties was subdivided, but the north side of Avondale Road (including the site of 3 and 5 Avondale Road) formed part of the south-western corner of the large estate of a Mr Borthwick. Opposite the site of 3 and 5 Avondale Road, and backing on to Hampden Road, was the large estate of local politician Robert Dyce Reid (Plan of subdivision of Parts of Crown portions 52 and 51, City of Prahran at Armadale, c.1881, SLV). The neighbouring allotments in Hampden, Avondale and Denbigh roads that were offered for sale in 1881 were described as being 'in close proximity to some of the noblest residences in the colony' (*Argus*, 2 September 1881, p. 2).

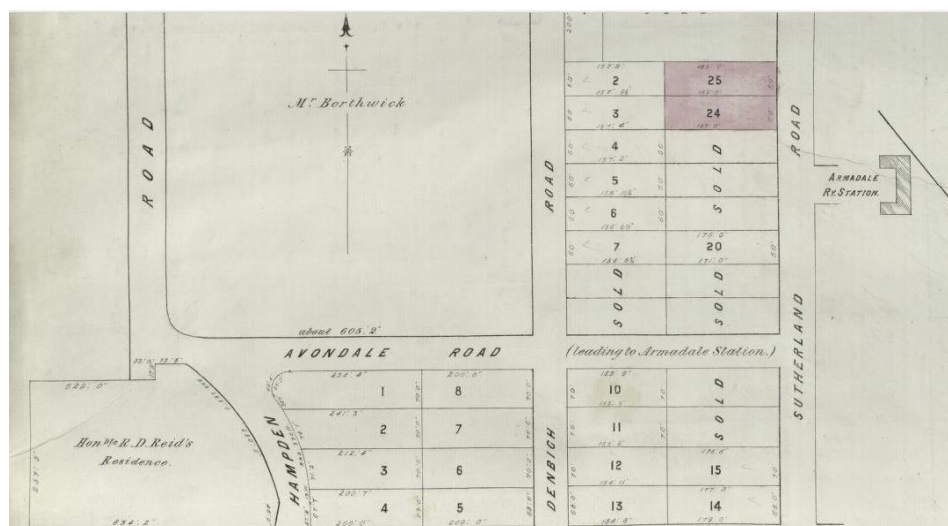


Figure 1. Plan of subdivision of Parts of Crown portions 52 and 51, City of Prahran at Armadale, c.1881, SLV

The dwellings at numbers 3 and 5 Avondale Road, Armadale, were built by 1890. In 1889 the properties were rated as vacant blocks, but in November 1890 there was a 7-roomed brick dwelling on each block, both owned by the Mercantile Bank. The occupants were Jane Clements (No. 3) and Henry Langlands, engineer (No. 5) (RB 1889, 1890, City of Prahran). A tender notice in May 1890 for 'labor [sic.], brick layers and scaffolding' at the corner of Hampden Street and Avondale Road may relate to the construction of the two houses that year (*Age*, 1 May 1890, p. 8). The identity of the advertiser is not provided. In June 1891, a notice appeared that water pipes for the Melbourne water supply were shortly to be laid in Avondale Road, Armadale, between Hampden Road and Auburn Grove (*Age*, 23 June 1891, p. 8).

The houses were built as a pair of matching detached villas. Both dwellings shared the same footprint, with a projecting bay, front verandah, chimney design and placement, and similar ornamentation. No. 3 Avondale Road occupies a large corner block. While it appears that there was sufficient room for this block to accommodate two house allotments, it was not subdivided for this purpose, thus providing room for a large garden and grounds. A large Liquidamber (*Liquidamber styraciflua*) in the front garden may be part of the early garden plantings.

In 1892 the pair of brick houses, of 7 rooms each, remained in the ownership of the Mercantile Bank, with occupants being Sidney Innes, accountant (No. 3) and Alexander H. Chomley (No. 5) (RB 1892, City of Prahran). Sidney Innes continued to occupy the house at No. 3 in 1898. That year, a death notice appeared for Ada Marian Innes, wife of S. Evelyn Innes, of 3 Avondale Road, Armadale (*Argus*, 13 January 1898, p. 1).

In 1900, the rate books list Samuel Bloomfield as the owner of 3 Avondale Road (with Thomas William Clark as occupant) as well as the adjacent vacant block, and the Mercantile Bank Assets Company as the owner of 5 Avondale Road, with Helen Gowan as occupant (RB 1900).

The MMBW Detail Plan of 1900 shows the two villas, with No. 3 occupying the larger (double) corner block. Both houses have a central front pathway with steps that lead to the front verandah. Both houses are shown with a rear yard and a detached washhouse with lavatory. The curve of the boundary fence of No. 3 Avondale Road, where it joins Hampden Road, follows the curve of Hampden Road to the south. (MMBW 1900).

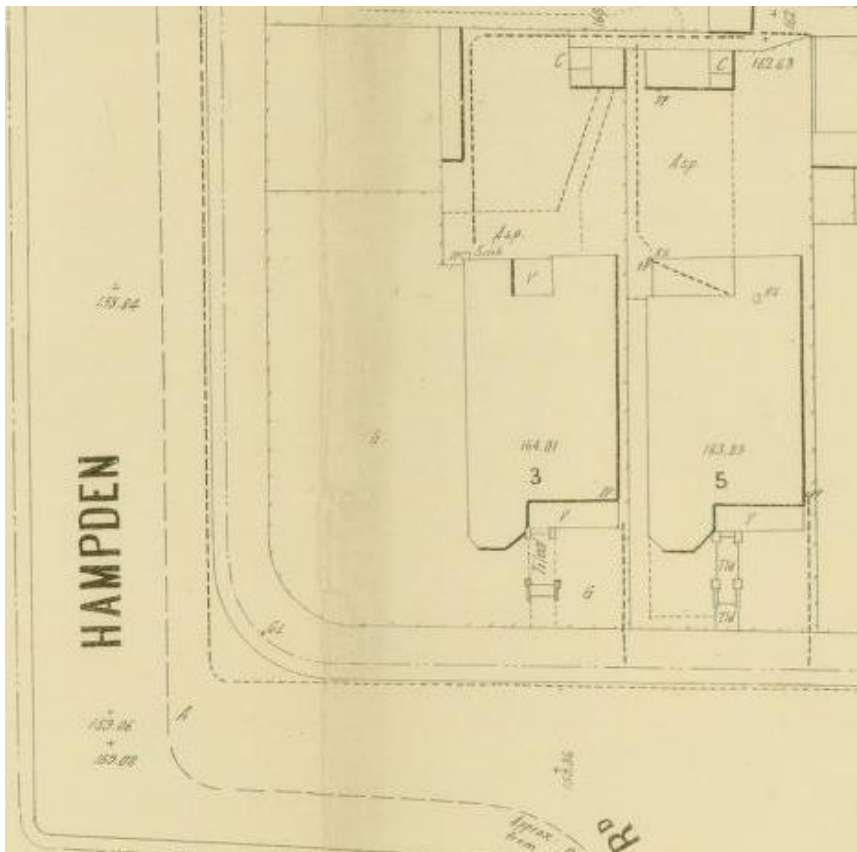


Figure 2. MMBW Detail Plan No. 996, dated 1900 (Source: State Library of Victoria)

The house at 3 Avondale Road was advertised for sale in 1903, when it was described as a well built and compact brick villa known as ‘The Briars’, situated at the corner of Hampden Road. It contained ‘Drawing and Dining Rooms, Maids Room, Bath, Pantry, Laundry, with Stone Foundations, Slate Roof, Tiled Verandah’ (*Argus*, 2 December 1903, p. 2)



Figure 3. Sale notice, 3 Avondale Road, Armadale, 1903 (Source: *Argus*, 3 December 1903, p. 2)

James Simpson Green Wright (1866–1947) and his wife Isobel Jean moved to the house at 3 Avondale Road in 1904 from a previous residence in Toorak (Miles Lewis Index; *Prahran Mechanics Institute Newsletter*, No. 38, April 2005, p. 5 – claims 1905). Wright had married Isabel Jean McConvill in 1900 and they had three children (*PMI Newsletter* 2005). In 1909, a son was born to James and Isobel Jean Wright at 3 Avondale Road; the birth notice gives the address as ‘The Briars’ (*Prahran Telegraph*, 10 July 1909, p. 1). By 1905-06, Wright had erected double-storey brick stables at the rear of the north-west corner of the block (City of Prahran RB 1905-06).

James S.G. Wright, who had emigrated from Scotland, became a leading Melbourne builder and contractor, with offices in the city: in Market Street and later at 421 Collins Street. Wright was prominent in the early decades of the twentieth century, a period that saw considerable development in the industrial sector. He was president of the Master Builders Association in 1906-07 during the period of a long, drawn-out building dispute (*Age*, 22 December 1906, p. 14).

Wright won contracts to construct a number of factories and warehouses in Melbourne in the early decades of the twentieth century, with many incorporating concrete construction techniques. Many were large modern complexes, erected for some of Melbourne's leading manufacturers. Notable works included a warehouse for Goldsbrough, Row and Co. in Kensington in 1906 (Melbourne HO1162); new premises for Johns and Waygood, 408-430 City Road, South Melbourne in 1909 (Port Phillip HO4; 'City of Port Phillip Heritage Review', 2017, p. 3); and the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation Factory at Fishermans Bend, Port Melbourne, in 1940, which was contracted to J.S.G. Wright and Co. (Miles Lewis Index, ref 63358). He also built the Prahran Technical Art School, 140 High Street, Windsor, in 1915 (Stonnington HO53) (*PMI Newsletter* 2005, p. 5).

Wright was a well-connected businessman with a number of business interests and investments, including his role as a director of at least two 'no liability' mining companies. In 1909, he was listed as a director of the Mia Mia Gold Mining Co., a small company based in Redesdale, with architect Percy Oakden as a fellow director (*Victorian Government Gazette*, 22 January 1909, p. 2830), and in 1935 he was a director of the New England Tin Mines Co. Ltd (*Daily Commercial News and Shipping List*, 29 August 1935, p. 4). In 1920, he was a founding director of the public company, National Portland Cement Ltd; fellow directors included prominent Melbourne businessmen Sir John Monash and BHP Director A.E. Bowes Kelly (*Table Talk*, 2 September 1920, p. 25). He held at least one other property in 1924-25, when he was rated as the owner of a house in Caulfield (City of Caulfield rate books, accessed via Ancestry.com).

James Wright died in 1947 and his Probate papers are held by the Public Record Office Victoria. These would provide full details of his assets at the time of death, and a description of the house. His widow Isobel Jean Wright died in 1950.

In 1949, an advertisement appeared in the 'Wanted to Rent' column in the *Age* for: 'Garage or space car, via Hampden-rd, Armadale MXY 330 ext 369' (*Age*, 2 April 1949, p. 11). This may relate to the property at 3 Avondale Road.

From 1969 to the present day (2017), 3 Avondale Road has been the home of cooking school The French Kitchen, run by Diane Holigue, who is the author of a cookbook by the same name published in 1983 as well as *A Lifetime of Cooking, Teaching and Writing from the French Kitchen* (2012).

Under the ownership of Diane and Gerard Holigue, the house at 3 Avondale Road was enlarged around 1990 with a two-storey rear extension set behind the front three rooms and designed to be no higher than the original roofline. This extension was enlarged slightly in 2000, and a large garage built along the Hampden Road boundary (Property File).

In 1905-06, No. 5 Avondale Rd was occupied by Helen Gowan and owned by the Mercantile Bank of Australia. It was rated as an 8-roomed brick residences (RB 1905-06). Later owners of 5 Avondale Road include Sophia G. Farrar in 1921-22 and Bingley A. Bowen in 1925-26 (RB, 1921-22, RB 1925-26).

### Sources

*Age*, 1 May 1890, p. 8.

*Age*, 23 June 1891, p. 8.

*Age*, 22 December 1906, p. 14.

*Age*, 2 April 1949, p. 11.

Ancestry.com

*Argus*, 2 September 1881, p. 2.

*Argus*, 13 January 1898, p. 1.

*Argus*, 2 December 1903, p. 2.

Butler, Graeme 2013. Heritage Assessment of 2-50 Elizabeth Street, Kensington, in 'Heritage Evidence: Amendment C207, Arden Macaulay Heritage Review', prepared for City of Melbourne.

'City of Port Phillip Heritage Review', 2017.

City of Prahran, Rate Books, 1901-1930.

*Daily Commercial News and Shipping List*, 29 August 1935, p. 4.

Commonwealth of Australia. Electoral Rolls.

Hubbard, Timothy 'Italianate Style' in Goad, Philip & Willis, Julie (eds.) 2012, *The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, Cambridge University Press.

Kearney, James 1855. *Melbourne and its Suburbs*. Melbourne. (State Library of Victoria)

MMBW Detail Plan no. 996, dated 1900, City of Prahran. (State Library of Victoria).

*Launceston Examiner*, 17 March 1938, p. 1.

Lewis, Miles. *Australian Architecture Index*.

Plan of Subdivision of Parts of Crown portions 52 and 51, City of Prahran at Armadale, c.1881. (State Library of Victoria).

Prahran Mechanics Institute Newsletter, No. 37, Feb 2005.

Prahran Mechanics Institute Newsletter, No. 38, April 2005.

*Prahran Telegraph*, 10 July 1909, p. 1.

Property File for 3 Avondale Road, City of Stonnington.

Sands and McDougall. Melbourne Directories.

*Table Talk*, 2 September 1920, p. 25.

*Victorian Government Gazette*, 22 January 1909, p. 2830.

### **Physical description**

The houses at 3 and 5 Avondale Road were built as two identical Italianate villas. They stand on the north-east corner of Avondale and Hampden roads, with no. 3 on a double block that has a long side boundary along Hampden Road.

Both houses sit at a slight elevation above Avondale Road, and their front doors are reached via two sets of steps. The first set, of three bluestone steps, is just within each front gate, while each front verandah is reached via another two bluestone steps. No. 3 retains its original curve masonry walls around the lower set of steps, as well as tessellated tiles to the front path and verandah floor that appear to be original. Neither house retains its original front fence, though no. 5 has a sympathetic reproduction iron palisade fence.

The front façade of both house can be described as follows: Each has rendered brick walls and an asymmetrical façade with a wide canted bay to the left-hand side, and a verandah to right-hand side. Both have features typical of the Italianate style, including a low-line M-profile hipped roof, clad in slates, rendered chimneys with a moulded cornice, pairs of brackets to the eaves, front verandahs with a convex roof set below the eaves and cast-iron columns and frieze-brackets, and front door surrounds with sidelight and highlight windows.



Figure 4. Front façade of 5 Avondale Road. Note casement box bay window beneath verandah. (Source: Context, 2017)

The two houses have the following decorative details of note: diaper patterning to the slate roofs, with bands of semi-hexagonal and diamond-shaped tiles with crimped edges; cast wythes and brackets to the chimneys; a dog-tooth moulding to the verandah beam and below the window sill beneath the verandah (no. 3, only); and fine cast and run cement ornament. This includes vermiculated quoins to corners and as panels below the windows of the projecting bay, projecting window sills on corbels to the windows of the projecting bay, moulded round-arches to these same windows with scrolled keystones and impost blocks decorate with acanthus leaves. The ornament to no. 5 is slightly more elaborate, with twisted colonnettes in the reveals of the arched front windows.



Figure 5. Early twentieth-century door and leadlights at 5 Avondale Road. (source: Context, 2017)

The two houses also differ slightly due to a remodelling of no. 5 that took place c.1900-10. This included the replacement of the original six-panel door (which remains at no. 3) with an Edwardian two-panel door featuring one large and two small Art Nouveau leadlights. The sash

window with sidelights beneath the verandah (which remains at no. 3) was replaced with a timber box bay window with casements and scalloped weatherboards to the base.



*Figure 6. Original front window at 3 Avondale Road with dogtooth moulding below sill. (Source: Context, 2017)*

Both houses have large rear additions, which are not visible when viewing from Avondale Road. The rear addition to no. 3 is visible from the far side of Hampden Road, and it has a sheer two-storey wall, but is set back behind the original extent of the house and has the same overall height (though the wall is taller). Views to it are blocked, in part by the c2000 double garage. The garage is of rendered masonry and adopts a parapeted gable form from the stable block.





Figure 7. Oblique aerial view of the stables at 3 Avondale Road. (Source: NearMap.com, August 2016)

The former stables at no. 3 stand in the north-west corner of the double block, adjoining Hampden Road. Their north wall forms part of the boundary with 17 Hampden Road. Like the house, they have rendered brick walls, and face south, into the site, but are obliquely visible from Hampden Road (see photo on page 1). A single sash window faces Hampden Road. The stables has a two-storey central bay, with single-storey wings on the west and east sides. This central wing is gable-fronted (facing south), with a parapet to the gable and corbelling beneath the eaves. At the apex of the gable is a vermiculated block. The small side wings have hipped roofs set behind parapets on the sides and rear. Some original sash and pivot windows appear to survive, while the hayloft door has been replaced with French doors. Other minor changes to openings, not visible from the street, may also be present.

### 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 the 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 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 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. 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 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.

Generally, the two villas at 3 & 5 Avondale Road, Armadale can be compared to other Significant medium-sized Italianate houses in the municipality, of which there are a relatively high number that adopt the asymmetrical Italianate plan form. Examples include more modest houses set on typically narrow suburban allotments, including: 34 Northcote Road, Armadale (in HO130), 59 Northcote Road, Armadale (in HO130), 103 Kooyong Road, Armadale (in HO130), 14 Donald Street, Prahran (in HO456), 22 Donald Street, Prahran (in HO456), 5 Fawkner Street, South Yarra (in HO131), 71 Tivoli Road, South Yarra (in HO149), 48 Davis Avenue, South Yarra (in HO150), and 50 The Avenue, Windsor (in HO148).

In detailing they can also be compared to larger Significant examples built on more generous allotments which allowed for a return verandah, often terminating at a second projecting bay to the side elevation. 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), 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).

The two villas at 3 & 5 Avondale Road have the same massing and a similar scale to 59 Northcote Road, Armadale. This house, however, is built of timber, so lacks much of the cement detail seen at the subject houses.



Figure 8. 59 Northcote Road, Armadale (Significant in HO130). (Source: *nmm.RealestateVIEW*)

Also of the same scale, and with the same rendered brick walls, is 71 Tivoli Road, South Yarra. It has similar cement mouldings to the front window arches and acanthus-leaf adorned impost blocks, as well as colonnettes to the window reveals. It also has a floral design impressed in the front wall.



Figure 9. 71 Tivoli Road, South Yarra (Significant in HO149). (Source: Abercrombies, 2013)

The villas at 3 & 5 Avondale Road can also be considered slightly smaller versions of their near neighbour at 11 Avondale Road, Armadale. This house has a return verandah, bracketed by two projecting canted bays, one on each street frontage. The cement decorative details are of a similar quality and intactness.



Figure 10. 11 Avondale Road, Armadale (Significant in HO123). (Source: Google Streetview).

In conclusion, the villas at 3 & 5 Avondale Road compare well with medium-sized Italianate villas that are Significant in the Stonnington Heritage Overlay, and have a similar quality of cement-render detailing to larger examples of this type as well.

In regard to the stables at 3 Avondale Road, Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd carried out the *Stables and Dairies in the City of Stonnington Heritage Project*, which comprised assessments of a small group of

residential stables that did not yet have HO protection. The assessments included the following contextual history and comparative analysis for Stonnington's stables (cited from 64 Rose Street, Armadale stables citation, 2012, pp. 2 & 4):

*In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, horses were essential for transport of people and goods as well as providing the horsepower for much other heavy work. Households and businesses relied on the horse and cart for deliveries of milk, meat and other necessities. The ownership of a horse drawn carriage was a particularly good indication of a person's wealth and status. Carriage houses and stables associated with the large houses and mansions of the wealthy were often elaborate masonry structures, second only in architectural importance to the main residence itself. Horses were valuable animals, and were generally well cared for, and their stables were usually well-constructed and maintained. Stables were generally of two storeys, with the horse stalls on the ground floor and a hay loft above, with access via large openings in the walls and with chutes conveying the feed to the feed bins in the stalls below.*

*Although motorised vehicles began to replace horses in the early twentieth century, this was a gradual rather than an abrupt transition. Horses were used for waste collection and earth moving by some Council after World War II, and the horse drawn milk cart persisted into the 1960s. ...*

*Structures associated with horse transport were once extremely common, but are becoming increasingly rare in metropolitan Melbourne. A municipal wide survey of stables that was undertaken as part of stage 1 of the Stonnington Stables and Dairies in the City of Stonnington Heritage Project (John Statham Urban Conservation, 2011), and further refined during stage 2 investigations (Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, May 2011), suggests that approximately 16 domestic stables survive in varying degrees of intactness. Only a small number of these are currently protected by a heritage overlay control. These were generally built on a grand scale to serve nineteenth century mansion estates, and include stables at Mandeville Hall (HO80), Stonnington (HO40), Northbrook (HO59) and Avoca (within the Alexandra Avenue precinct, HO122). Stables associated with the former Eilher mansion are also protected by a heritage overlay (HO241), but this building was substantially altered when it was converted into a residence in the twentieth century.*

*More modest stables associated with closer, middle and upper middle class suburban development in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century are not as well represented on the Stonnington heritage overlay schedule. Such stables were typically double-storey brick or timber buildings with the horse stalls on the ground floor and a hay loft above. Stylistically, relatively simple picturesque Gothick designs with gable roofs were favoured for stables, even though the associated house was more often than not built in an entirely different Victorian Italianate style.*

*Examples of this type of stable can be found at the rear of 14 Sorrett Avenue, Malvern, 1A Hawksburn Road, South Yarra, 28 Northcote Road, Armadale and 64 Rose Street, Armadale. The 14 Sorrett Avenue stables stand out amongst this group because they display a higher standard of design and a relatively high degree of integrity ...*

The stables to the rear of 3 Avondale Road, Armadale were not assessed as part of Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd's work in 2011. The four stables considered likely to meet the threshold of local significance in the municipality were the following:

- HO396 (house) Former stables rear 14 Sorrett Avenue, Malvern – a Victorian double-storey bichrome brick stables building with a gabled slate roof and darker contrasting Hawthorn brick quoins and arched lintels. The building was assessed to be substantially intact despite a modern addition obscuring part of the north elevation and the sympathetic replacement of the window and door joinery (stables graded A2).



Figure 11. Stables at 14 Sorrett Avenue, Malvern (HO396) (source: National Trust, nd).

- HO130 Armadale Precinct, Former stable rear 28 Northcote Road, Armadale – a simply detailed double-storey timber-framed stables building with weatherboard walls and a gabled corrugated iron roof. The building was assessed to be substantially intact externally despite its poor condition (stables graded A2).



Figure 12. Timber stables at 28 Northcote Road, Armadale (Significant in HO130) (source: City of Stonnington).

- HO130 Armadale Precinct, Former stable at 64 Rose Street, Armadale – a simple red brick stables structure with a gabled corrugated iron roof which was built before c1909. The building's exterior form was assessed to be largely intact despite modern windows and doors to the north elevation (stables graded A2).



Figure 13. Brick stables at the rear of 64 Rose Street, Armadale (Significant in HO130) (source: City of Stonnington)

- HO308 Former outbuilding rear 17 Dundonald Avenue, Malvern East - understood to have contained former stables, laundry and servants' accommodation. Aerial photographs show a large rectangular plan outbuilding with a corrugated iron gable roof and a brick chimney (stables ungraded – further investigation required).

An additional example was identified and assessed as part of the larger Victorian Houses Heritage Study (Context, 2016-17):

- HO529 Former coachhouse-stables at rear of Queen Anne villa at 878 High Street, Armadale – a fine bichrome brick building of 1888 with a slate roof. It has a two-storey central pavilion with hayloft, flanked by two single-storey hipped-roof sections. The joinery has been replaced in-kind, but the building is otherwise intact.



Figure 14. Rear stables complex at 878 High Street, Armadale (source: Marshall White, 2013).

The stables at the rear of 3 Avondale Road can most closely be compared to the former stables at 64 Rose Street, Armadale. Both were built in the early twentieth century, and they have a similar form. Both are two-storey masonry structures with parapeted end gables, though 64 Rose Street has face brick walls, while 3 Avondale Road is rendered brick. The massing of the stables at 3 Avondale Road is also very similar to that of 878 High Street. Like the other five stables identified, the stables at 3 Avondale Road are a rare survivor in the municipality, and make a major contribution to the heritage significance of the place.

### **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*

*4.3.2 Changing Modes of Transport – from horses to motor vehicles*

*8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal*

### **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 pair of Italianate villas, ‘The Briars’ at 3 Avondale Road and the house at 5 Avondale Road, Armadale, both built in 1890. The two houses are single-storey dwellings with rendered brick walls and an asymmetrical plan form featuring a canted projecting bay and cast-iron verandah to the front façade of each.

Also the rendered brick stables at 3 Avondale Road, constructed in 1905, are significant.

The current front fences and rear extensions of both properties, as well as the garage of 3 Avondale Road, are not significant.

#### **How is it significant?**

3 and 5 Avondale Road are of local architectural and aesthetic significance, while the stables at 3 Avondale Road are of local significance for their associations and rarity.

#### **Why is it significant?**

Architecturally, the two dwellings are fine and intact representative examples of Victorian Italianate villa residences built for middle-class residents of Armadale, of the sort that began to characterise the suburb in the 1880s and 1890s. The two near-identical villas exhibit typical features of this type including the asymmetrical plan form of a projecting canted bay to one side of a cast-iron verandah, ruled render finish, hipped roof clad in slate and rendered chimneys with decorative cornices. (Criterion D)

Aesthetically, the two dwellings retain a high level of ornamentation executed in cast and run cement and other materials. Decorative elements of note include diaper patterning of the slate roofing, cast wythes and brackets to the chimney cornices, dog-tooth mouldings to verandah beams and to a window sill (sill of No. 3, only), vermiculated quoins and panels, scrolled keystones to window arches, acanthus leaves to impost blocks, and twisted colonnettes to window reveals (No. 5, only). (Criterion E)

The stables to the rear of No. 3 Avondale Road is a very rare and intact example of a nineteenth century stables complex in Stonnington. It is also of significance for its association with its owner and builder, James Wright, who was a prominent Melbourne builder and contractor. (Criteria B & H)



## Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay to the extent of the whole properties at 3 & 5 Avondale Road as defined by the title boundaries.

HO Schedule controls: Outbuilding controls – Stables at 3 Avondale Road

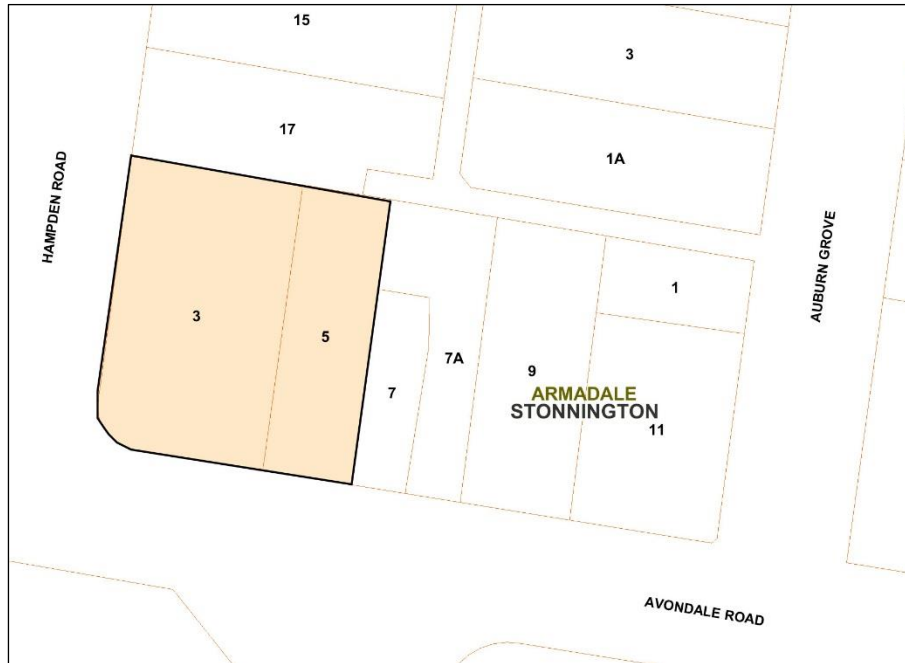


Figure 15. Recommended extent of Heritage Overlay for 3 & 5 Avondale Road, Armadale. (Source: [www.land.vic.gov.au](http://www.land.vic.gov.au))

Recommended grading: A2