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Huntingfield Road Proposed Conservation Area



September 1997

HUNTINGFIELD ROAD TOORAK

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd in support of a proposed amendment to the local planning scheme which will create an urban conservation area centred on Huntingfield Road, Toorak.

The report builds on work carried out by John Curtis Pty Ltd for the *Toorak Residential Character Study*, 1991 and by Context Pty Ltd for the *City of Prahran Conservation Review*, 1993.

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 PROPOSED URBAN CONSERVATION AREA

The proposed Urban Conservation Area comprises the following: all addresses in Huntingfield Road, Nos 169, 171 and 173 Kooyong Road and 28, Irving Road.

HUNTINGFIELD ROAD TOORAK

HISTORY

Huntingfield Road is the result of the 1934 subdivision of two significant estates, 'Norla' in Irving Road and 'Carrical' in Kooyong Road. The demolition of these former grand homes and the subsequent development of Huntingfield Road with prestigious houses is typical of the development of much of the Toorak area.

In 1837 Robert Hoddle surveyed Prahran into sixteen main blocks bounded by main roads. These were sold as large Crown Allotments and were subsequently subdivided and re-sold. On the more valuable high land towards Prahran's east, large mansion estates developed, contrasting with the smaller allotments created on the cheap flat land at the western end of the municipality.¹

The area bounded by Orrong Road, Malvern Road, Kooyong Road and Toorak Road sold at the Crown Lands Sale on 27 June 1849 and became the site of several significant mansion developments. James Jackson, who was later to build 'Toorak House' to the north of Toorak Road, purchased lots 27 and 28. The most valuable land, lot 27, included 50 acres of high ground extending from Kooyong Road to Irving Road. Lot 28 included 55 acres between Irving Road and Clendon Road and lot 29, which was sold to Jackson's partner, James Rae, included 54 acres between Clendon Road and Orrong Road.

In 1852 Alfred Ross, a merchant, purchased lots 28 and 29. The Kearney map of 1855 shows 'Orrong', the first house to be built in the area, located midway between Gardiners Creek Road (Toorak Road) and Commercial Road (Malvern Road). In 1860 St John's Church was built on land at the entrance of the drive to 'Orrong' and the carriageway became the northern end of Clendon Road.² 'Orrong's' large estate was gradually subdivided and by 1890, John Horsfall had transformed the house, by then on 2 acres, into a forty-roomed mansion.

Toorak was by this time considered the 'vice-regal district',³ and the proximity to 'Toorak House', Victoria's first Government House, and the undulating land attracted Melbourne's wealthy families including pastoralists, merchants, military officers and professionals. Other grand homes, including 'Woorigoleen', 'Dunraven' and 'Coonac', were soon built on land facing the main roads.⁴

1 Nigel Lewis, *Prahran Character and Conservation Study*, 1992.
2 E.M. Robb, *Early Toorak and District*, p 79.
3 *Ibid*, p 75.
4 MMBW Detail Plan, 40 foot to the inch, 1895.

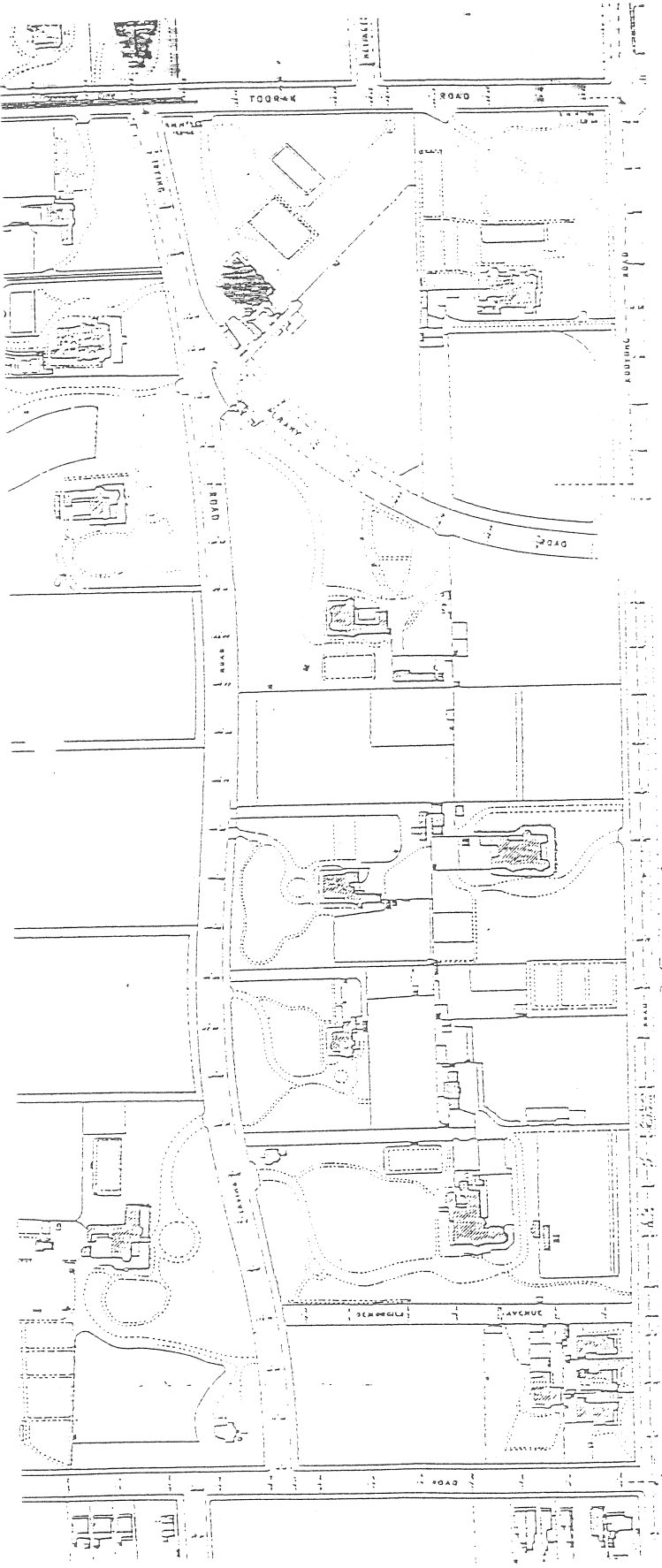


Illustration 1 MMBW Map from c1895 showing large mansion estates including 'Norla' and 'Carical'

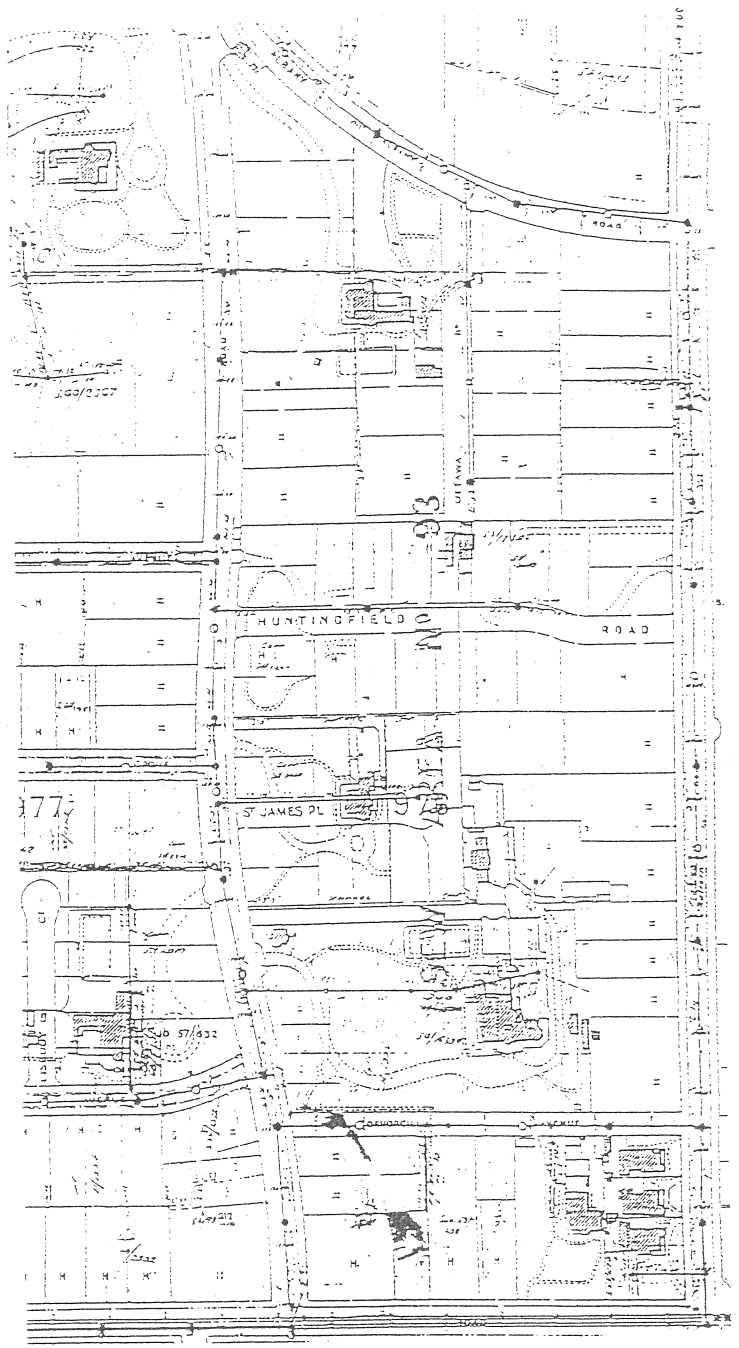


Illustration 2 MMBW Map from c1934 showing subsequent subdivision

Two large estates on lot 27, 'Scotsburn', owned by pastoralist and politician Sir James McBain⁵ and Robert Harper's 'Myoora', shared the area north of Albany Road. Merchant and politician Robert Harper was the founder of the Toorak Presbyterian Church.⁶ South of Albany Road, 'Ottowa's' occupants included pastoralist and Member of the Legislative Assembly Charles Officer,⁷ and solicitor and politician (Sir) John Mark Davies. 'Ottowa's' estate of about ten and a half acres was subdivided in the 1920s when Ottawa Avenue was created.⁸

'Norla', located to the south of 'Ottowa', was one of the first houses to be built in Irving Road. John McVean owned the large brick house from 1877 and ten years later he sold the property to Octavius Beale.⁹ The house and tennis court on 3 acres of land was the home of Sir Simon Fraser from 1890.¹⁰ Fraser (1832-1919), a pastoralist involved in artesian drilling, had been elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1874 and was later M.L.C. for South Yarra. He was also a member of the National Convention, which framed the Commonwealth Constitution, and on his retirement in 1913 was a member of the Victorian Senate.¹¹ The Fraser family occupied 'Norla' until the estate was sold in 1933. In that year, Neville Fraser owned the property at 16-18 Irving Road, part of the estate of Lady Anna Fraser. On 20 November 1933 the 12 room brick house was sold to architect Arnaud Wright.¹² Stanley Burston occupied the house in 1934 prior to its demolition.

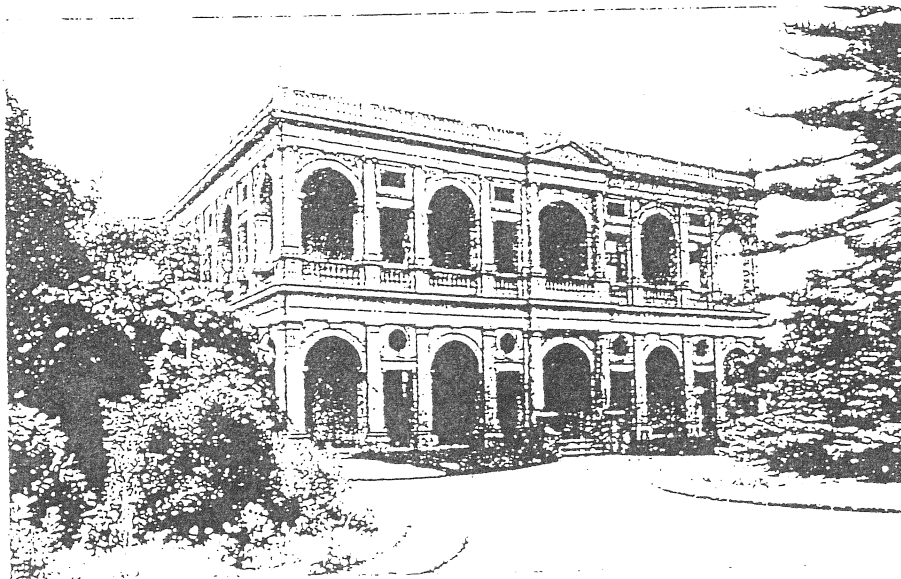


Illustration 3 *Norla, Irving Road Toorak, c1903*

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- 5 Paul de Serville, *Pounds and Pedigrees. The Upper Class in Victoria 1850-80*. Melbourne 1981, p 413.
6 Ibid. p 399.
7 Ibid. p 324.
8 Malone, *Section 14, North East Toorak*, unpublished essay, p 7.
9 Prahran Rate Books 1887-8 No 778.
10 M.M.B.W. Drainage Plan, No 34120, 1903.
11 *Who's Who in Australia*, 1929, p 906.
12 City of Prahran Rate Book 1933-34, No 1902.

Immediately to the east of 'Noria', facing Kooyong Road, was the home of Thomas Lockwood, an apple orchardist. Lockwood owned large areas of land, which became the sites of Monash University and Wesley College at Syndal.¹³ Lockwood's Kooyong Road house was built around 1896. In 1929 the 16 room house called 'Carrical' was owned by James Burston. Burston was Chairman of Samuel Burston and Co. Maltsters, and Director of Barrett Bros., Burston and Co. Pty. Ltd.¹⁴ In 1934 architect Arnaud Wright and Edith Overell purchased 'Carrical' at 173 Kooyong Road.¹⁵

'Noria' and 'Carrical' were demolished for the subdivision of what was to become Huntingfield Road. The curving line of Huntingfield Road follows the former drive of 'Carrical'. It is most likely that the visit to Melbourne in May 1934 by Victoria's new Governor and his wife, Lord and Lady Huntingfield,¹⁶ led to the choice of street name. Huntingfield Road was proclaimed in 1935,¹⁷ and the road was completed using sustenance labour.¹⁸

A nine room brick house at 169 Kooyong Road had been built in 1929 prior to the subdivision of Huntingfield Road. The house was built on the south corner of 'Carrical's' estate for furniture manufacturer Sam Berkovitz.¹⁹ Berkovitz sold the house to sharebroker, Thomas Hastie in 1939 who was a director of several companies and a member of the Stock Exchange of Melbourne.²⁰ The first house to be built in Huntingfield Road was number 2 in 1934 for barrister Norman O'Bryan. The Hon. Mr Justice Norman O'Bryan practised at the Victorian Bar from 1920-1938 and in 1939 became Justice of the Supreme Court.²¹

Architect Arnaud Wright, in partnership with Edith Overell, having purchased the 'Noria' and 'Carrical' estates, owned all the allotments in Huntingfield Road in 1934. The land was quickly sold and within a few years new architect designed houses occupied most of the allotments. In 1935 Reginald Baillieu, a director of the Myer Emporium Ltd., erected a 10 room brick house on lot 9.²² Baillieu was one of the many professionals who built new homes in Huntingfield Road and chose prominent architects to design them. These architects included Marcus Martin, Walter Mason, Cowper Murphy and Appleford and the developer of the estate Arnaud Wright.

13 Personal recollection, Rod Lockwood, great grandson of Thomas Lockwood. 13.5.97.
14 *Fred Johns's Annual*, 1929, p 72.
15 City of Prahran Rate Book 1933-4, No 2180.
16 *The Argus*, 15 May, 1934.
17 Huntingfield Road proclaimed (Gazetted, page no. 1704) Date: 17.6.1935.
18 Malone, loc cit.
19 City of Prahran Rate Book, No. 1793, 1929-30.
20 *Who's Who in Australia*, 1947, p 409.
21 *Ibid.* p 647.
22 City of Prahran Rate Book 1935-6, No 2145.

DESCRIPTION

Huntingfield Road is small tree lined avenue in Toorak, southwest of the intersection of Kooyong and Toorak Roads. It is situated between Irving Road to the west and Kooyong Road to the east. The area under consideration comprises 20 dwellings (1-19 Huntingfield Road; 169, 171 and 173 Kooyong Road and 28 Irving Road).

Huntingfield Road is typical of the quiet, tree lined thoroughfares that occupy this part of Toorak. The road is surfaced in bitumen with concrete kerbs and crossovers. Planting strips (1.8m) are separated from property boundaries by concrete footpaths (1.2m) and feature formal plantings of deciduous trees which appear to have survived from the original subdivision. Although additional street plantings in recent years have tended to diminish the effect of the formal plantings, the avenues of trees remain a strong visual feature of the area. Gardens are well-maintained and tend to reinforce the formality of the street plantings with orderly arrangements of deciduous trees and shrubs.

High front walls in materials that reflect the construction of the house within are typical, as are timber power poles, which are present on the north side of the street, but in insufficient numbers to have a negative visual impact. The house allotments throughout the area are of more or less uniform size and are arranged in a strict geometrical fashion. Overall, the streetscape conveys a sense of formality and order.

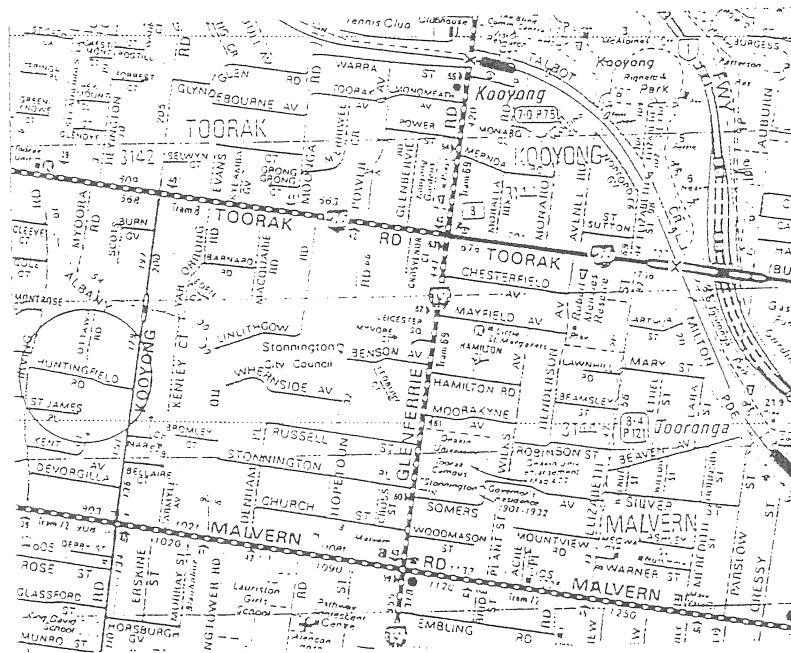


Illustration 4 Location Map (Melways Map 59)
Huntingfield Road shown circled

Architecturally, the housing in Huntingfield Road derives primarily from a single stylistic source, the Georgian Revival. Some buildings adopt the simple massing of the idiom with none of the detail (12) and others apply the shutters, balconies, porticos and Adamesque touches to other formal types (2 and 4). However, much of the building stock comprises full and confident variations on the Georgian Revival theme and excellent examples survive at 5, 7, 8, 10 and 17 Huntingfield Road. Given the interwar tendency towards eclecticism, consistency of this order is rare. The most notable exception to the interwar Georgian uniformity of the avenue occurs in the form of a spectacular residence at 9 Huntingfield Road, which draws inspiration from Tudor sources typified by its half timbering, steeply pitched slate roof and black painted joinery.



Illustration 5 Huntingfield Road from Kooyong Road

Although some renovation has occurred (and continues to occur - 6 Huntingfield Road has recently undergone refurbishment), both the new building activity and the modifications to the existing building stock generally contribute to the character of the original development. New units at 16 Huntingfield Road have adopted the simple massing, red brick and white shutters superficially associated with the Georgian style, while a new house at 3 Huntingfield Road successfully applies Regency inspired detail to what is essentially a modern house. Other buildings such as 14 and 15 Huntingfield Road, which have been modified over time to incorporate the plain, rendered surfaces often associated with Georgian buildings, serve to further unify the appearance of the streetscape.

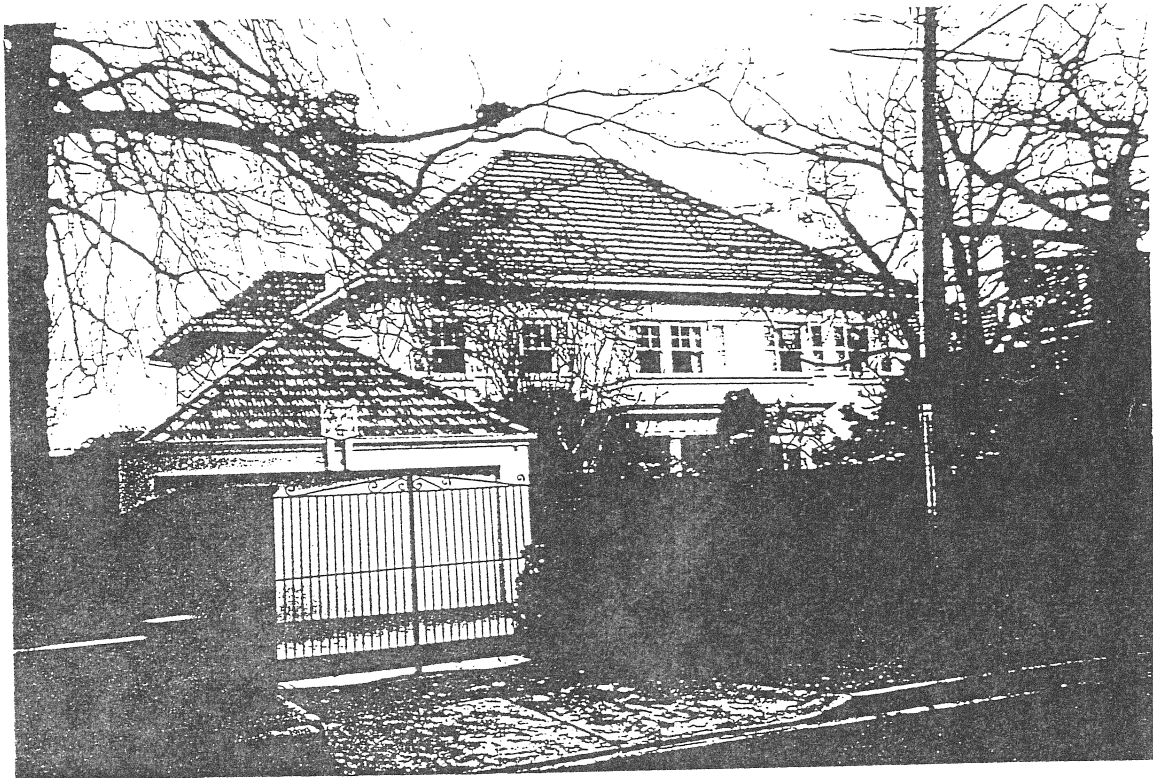


Illustration 6 5 Huntingfield Road

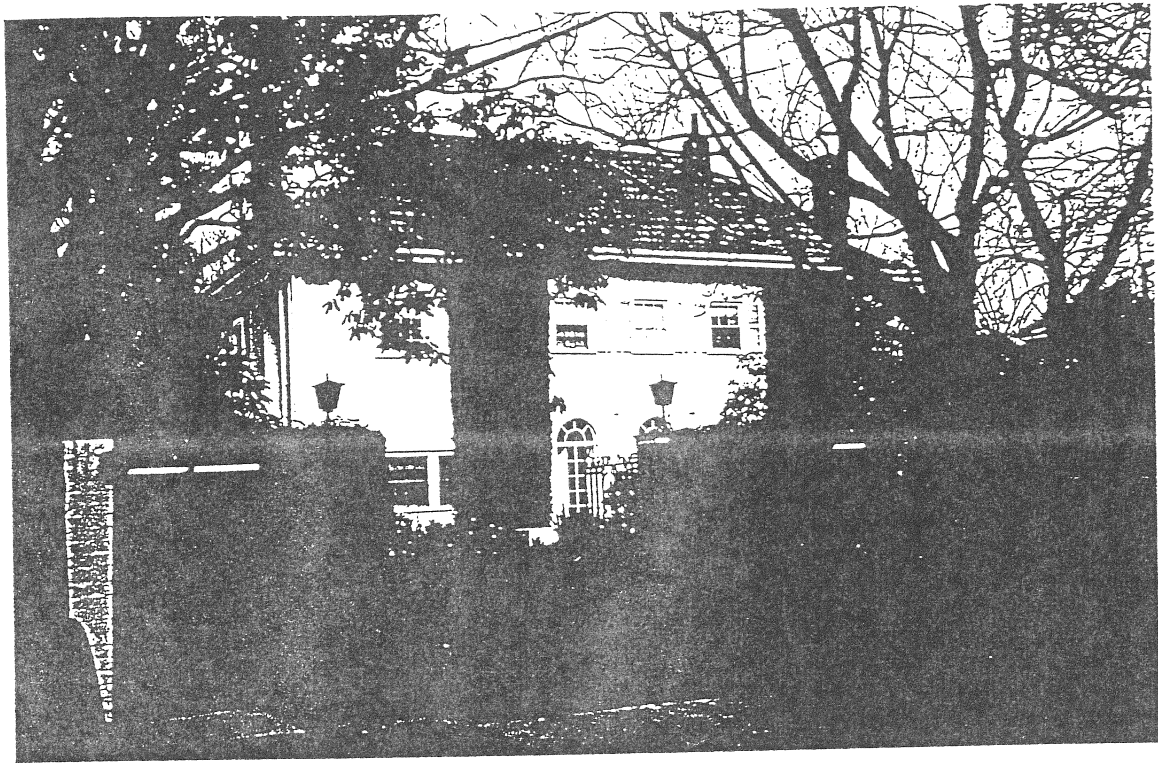


Illustration 7 *4 Huntingfield Road*

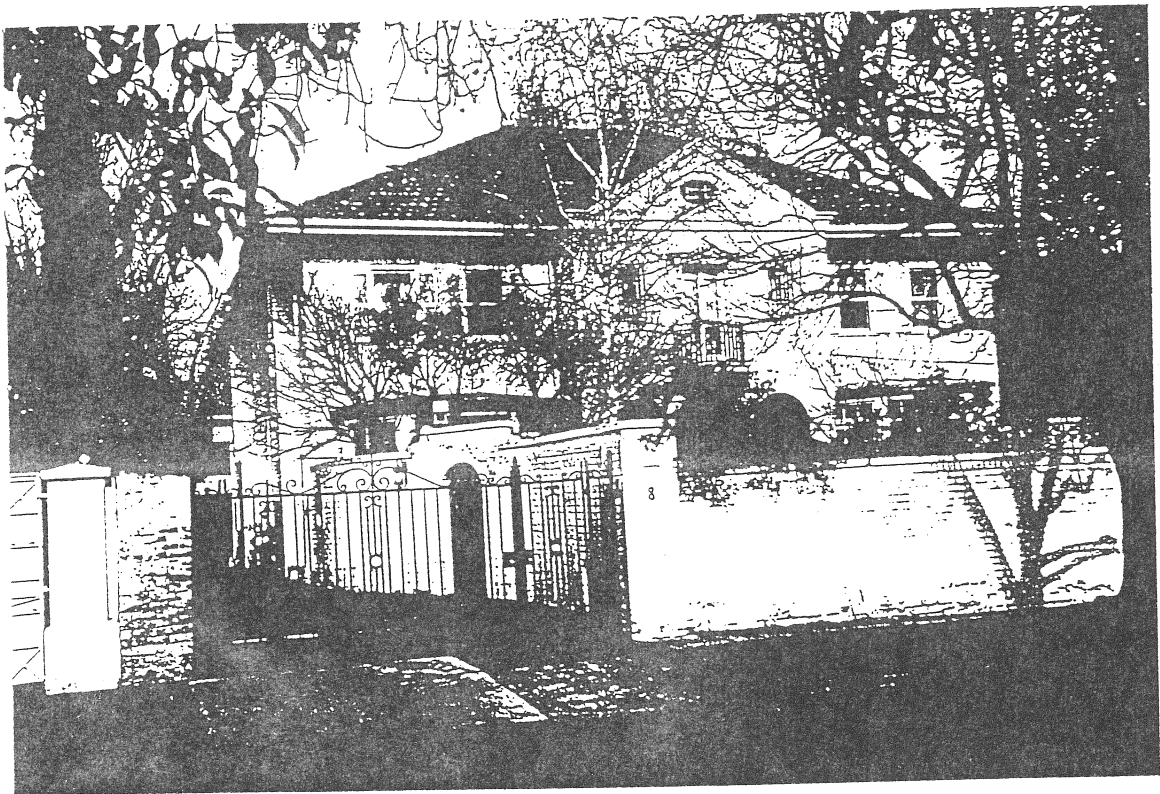


Illustration 8 *8 Huntingfield Road*

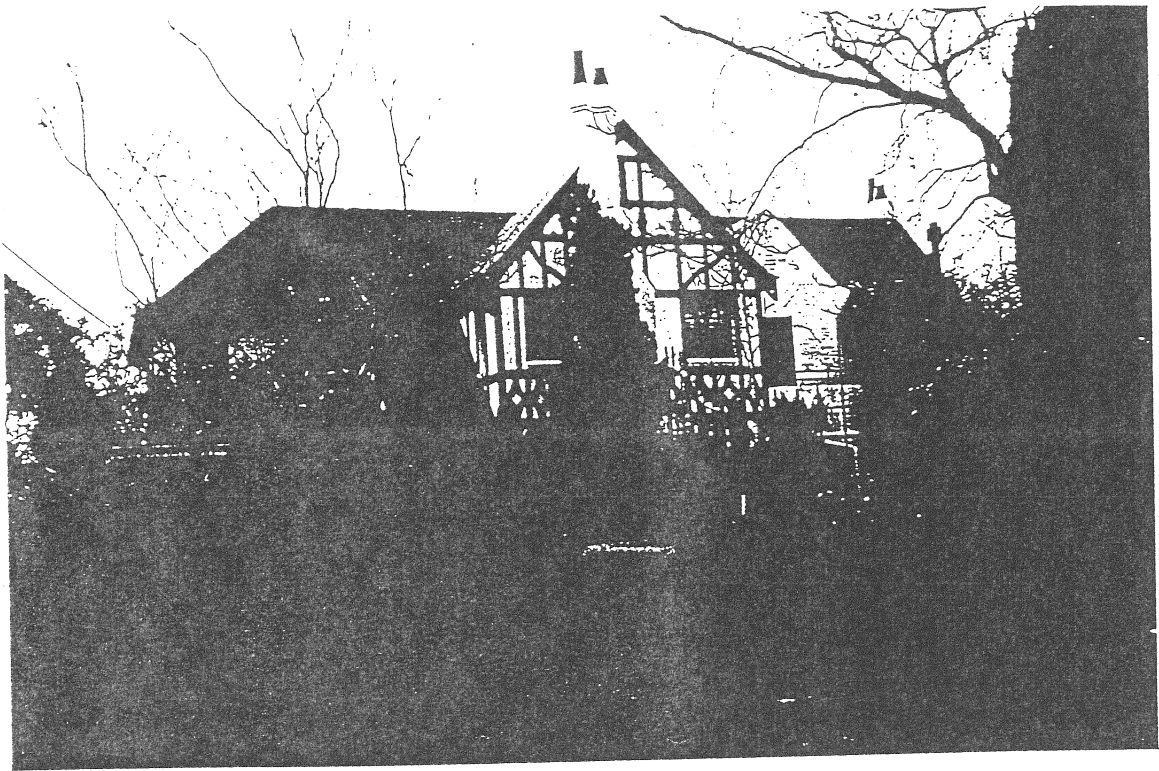


Illustration 9 9 Huntingfield Road

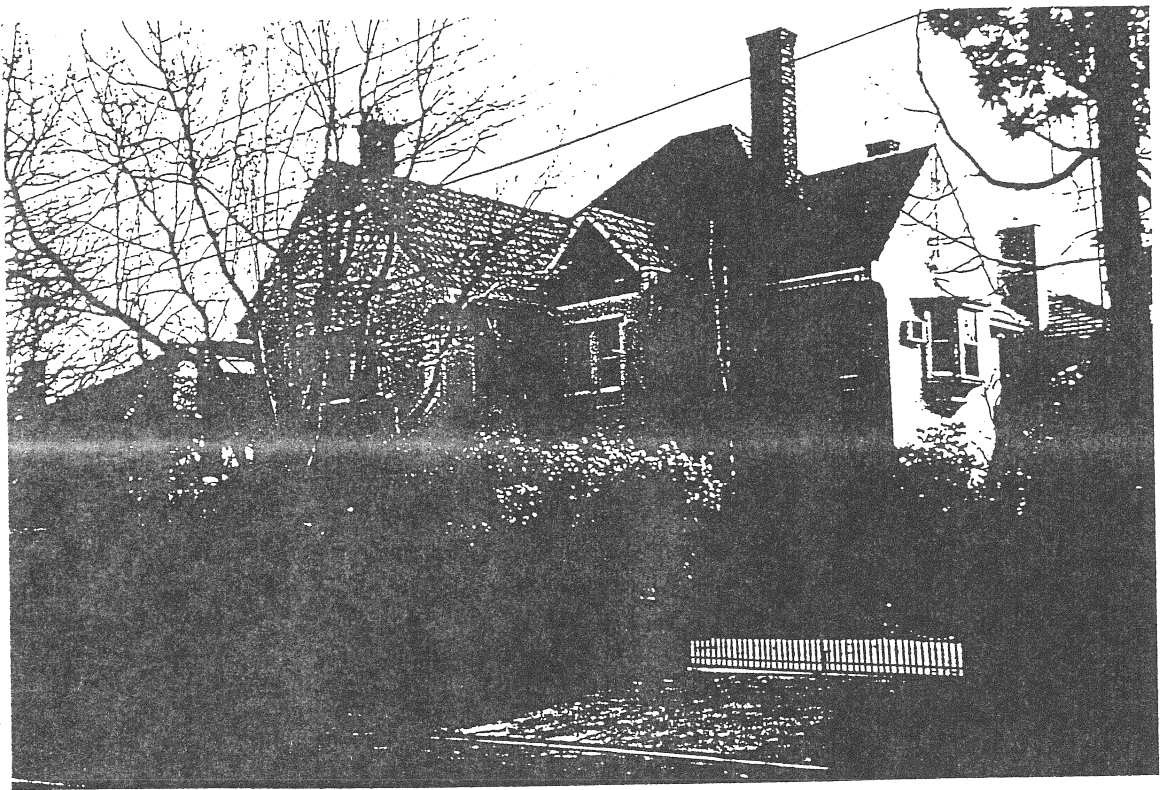


Illustration 10 171 Kooyong Road (21 Huntingfield Road)

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Huntingfield Road is an important and distinctive example of an interwar residential estate. The quality of its homes, the relative uniformity of their scale and architectural character, the extent to which the original interwar homes survive largely intact, the slight bend to the road and the maturity of its street trees all combine to encapsulate the essence of an affluent interwar dormitory suburb.

The most obvious aspect of the street is the size and quality of the housing, typical of the Toorak area, Kooyong and parts of Malvern but rarely found in such consistency in the suburbs beyond. Though no individual houses are exceptional, the consistency of their period of construction, scale, setbacks and integrity to an original appearance is most unusual in Melbourne's inner suburbs. In most respects the subdivision retains its appearance from the late 1930s, although in a mature form.

While various other interwar residential suburbs, such as Camberwell, Essendon, Kew and Caulfield also contain middle class estates of high quality, in most instances they comprise primarily single storey villas or a combination of one and two storey housing, as opposed to the consistent two storey character of Huntingfield Road. Perhaps the best comparison is with Montalto Avenue, Toorak, a primarily two storey interwar subdivision which is also of interest for its unusual street layout.



Illustration 11 Extent of Proposed Conservation Area

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Huntingfield Road is a small tree lined avenue near the intersection of Toorak and Kooyong Roads in Toorak, developed through the 1934 subdivision of two nineteenth century estates by architect Arnaud Wright and his partner Edith Overell. The area's special character and significance derive from the number of quality homes designed by prominent architects for wealthy professional clients. The extant buildings are substantial two storey dwellings drawing principally from Georgian sources and dating from the period immediately prior to World War II. The area is also noteworthy for its private gardens and street trees which combine to promote an atmosphere of order and formality.

Huntingfield Road is of regional significance as a largely intact example of a prestigious, interwar subdivision, which pursues a single stylistic theme despite the involvement of a range of architects and builders. It features examples of the domestic work of noted Melbourne architects Marcus Barlow, Martin & Tribe and Walter Mason. The largely intact body of two storey interwar houses, the quality of their design and construction, and the maturity of surrounding trees and gardens all contribute to the significance of the place as a fine and distinctive example of affluent residential development from the interwar period in Toorak and the greater metropolitan area.

APPENDIX

SCHEDULE OF BUILDINGS, DESCRIPTIONS AND
RECOMMENDED GRADINGS

HUNTINGFIELD ROAD

- 2 B This house has been enlarged considerably since its original construction as an 11 room residence for (Justice) Norman O'Brien in 1934. The exterior detail is derived from Georgian sources but its rambling massing shows its growth by accretion.
- 3 C Although this building is a recent addition to the Huntingfield Road, having been constructed in 1993, it nonetheless makes a valuable contribution to the architectural character of the street.
- 4 B This 10 room brick house built for H. Latreille in 1935 elaborates on the Georgian theme found throughout the street. It is substantially intact and has retained its unusual side entry derived from a *porte cochere*, albeit at a reduced scale.
- 5 B This Georgian structure was built for Edith Green in 1935 to designs prepared by Arnaud Wright. It is a mature example of the Georgian Revival style. It is noteworthy for both the quality and quantity of its detail which includes an impressive portico with columns styled after the Greek Doric order and for its shutters which feature decorative fretwork recalling funerary urns.
- 6 C This house was built for noted Myer director, Reg Baillieu, in 1935 or 1936. The architect is unknown. The building is currently undergoing refurbishments which include substantial, but appropriate, alterations to the facade.
- 7 B This is another residence built to designs by Arnaud Wright, the original developer of Huntingfield Road. The first owner was J.A.F. Schmidt who subsequently changed his name to J.A.F. Shipton. The house reiterates the Georgian Revival style found throughout the street. It is finished in red brick with white dressings that include a classically-inspired portico, an elegant balcony and white shutters.
- 8 B MMBW connection details note that the first owner of this handsome Georgian residence was Commander C.R. Price. It was built to designs by Cowper, Murphy and Appleford in 1935. It features a variety of details, drawn from Georgian sources, including elliptical and bay windows, round headed arches, and decorative, Adamesque scrolls in cement render on external walls.
- 9 A2 This impressive structure was designed by noted local architect, Walter Mason for solicitor, Ronald Stewart in 1938. It draws inspiration from Tudor sources, typified by its half timbering, steeply-pitched slate roof and dark-painted joinery. Although this building is stylistically removed from others in the review area, it contributes, nonetheless, to the character of the street through its massing, its scale and its setback.
- 10 B This 10-room house was built for stockbroker, Phillip Carney in 1935. Its symmetrical facade is distinguished by a portico of columns recalling Greek sources.
- 11 B C.H. Hollinshed designed this unassuming residence for merchant, T. Watt in 1936. Although the high brick fence obscures much of this structure from public view, its plain white surfaces contribute, nonetheless to the character of the street.

- 12 B This uncomplicated building was built for Mrs A.L. Jack in 1938. It was designed by noted Melbourne architect Marcus Martin. It is unusual in that it demonstrates the simple massing, typical of many houses in the street, without the elaborate Georgian details, to create a simple, cottage flavour. The house is complemented by a garage of similar character.
- 14 B This building combines plain surfaces of Mediterranean architecture with massing and roof forms derived from Old English sources. It was built for Fred Thomas in 1937.
- 15 C This building dates from 1953 but has more recently been extensively modified. It was built for J. O'Connell, an engineer. Despite its relatively recent construction, it is a further example of the work of Arnaud Wright, the original developer of Huntingfield Road. The building is the only single-storey structure within the review area and appears to have been modified through the addition of a parapet and plain rendering to produce an exterior that more closely resembles others in the street.
- 16 C Winston is a recent addition to Huntingfield Road. This block of two-storey units was built by developers, Irving Heights Pty Ltd, in 1977. It is a well-mannered building which has adopted the red brick and white dressings often associated with the Georgian Revival.
- 17 B No 17 Huntingfield Road was constructed in 1937. It is another property designed and developed by Arnaud Wright. As with its neighbour, No. 15, ratebooks show the first owner to be J. O'Connell, which is surprising given the large time interval between the two. It is another building in the Georgian revival style that is prevalent throughout the street.
- 19 B This house 8 room brick house was built for Fisher Horton in 1936 and is possibly another example of the work of Arnaud Wright. It is another home constructed broadly in the Georgian Revival style although its grey render, black shutters and substantial *porte cochere* distinguish it from others in the road. The property is also noteworthy for its formal garden behind wrought iron gates.

KOOYONG ROAD

- 169 B This expansive home was built for prominent Melbourne manufacturer Sam Berkowitz. The designer is unknown. It successfully synthesises elements from a variety of contemporary sources including Georgian Revival and Spanish Mission.
- 171 B This 9 room house was built for E. Abrahams in 1935. It is finished in a combination of clinker brick and render in a manner that recalls Old English antecedents. The building features boldly expressed domestic elements such as chimneys and bay windows. It is also noteworthy for decorative features such as panels of herringbone patterned brickwork and stained glass windows. The residence is also known as 21 Huntingfield Road.
- 173 B This 10 room house was designed for E. Berkowitz, who was presumably, related to Sam Berkowitz at 169 Kooyong Road. It is modelled generally after Georgian and Mediterranean antecedents although modifications in recent years have resulted in substantial alteration to the detail.

IRVING ROAD

28

B

This 12 room house was built for Mrs Cecil Naughton around 1938. The designer is unknown. It successfully synthesises elements from Georgian sources such as shutters and balustraded balconies with Tudor elements such as tall decorative chimneys. The use of salt glazed manganese bricks for the walls adds a modern note to the composition. This house typifies the eclectic approach to domestic design prevalent between the wars.

STONNINGTON PLANNING SCHEME

LOCAL SECTION

AMENDMENT L29
Amendment L58



SCALE 1:5000

REFER PLANNING SCHEME MAPS NO. 2UC & 5UC

LEGEND:

UC1 URBAN CONSERVATION AREA

This Map forms part of Amendment L29
exhibited on 30 October 1997.