

Name	'Wandai', now 'Coomaroo'
Address	63 Albany Toad, Toorak
Place Type	Residence (House)
Survey Date	December, 2015 and January, 2016 (external inspection from the street)
Date of Construction	1898/99

Intactness Good Fair Poor



No. 63 Albany Road, Toorak. (Source: Kay & Burton)



No. 63 Albany Road, Toorak. (Source: Kay and Burton)



Kearney's Map of Melbourne and Its Suburbs (1855). This shows the area only having isolated development.

History

The name 'Toorak' is now synonymous with wealth, prestige and first class residential real estate. This association was equally relevant one hundred and fifty years ago when James Jackson built his mansion on 148 acres of well-wooded land, and named it 'Toorak House'. 'Toorak House' was not only the grandest mansion in the colony, but also became the vice-regal residence from 1854. The name 'Toorak', an Aboriginal word meaning 'reedy swamp' or 'duckweed' (originating from the amount of this weed found floating on the marshy flats between Toorak Road and the river), was an unusual choice for a prestigious house which in turn gave its name to a prestigious suburb.¹

The early development of the immediate environs was characterised by the mansion estates. In Kooyong Road immediately opposite No. 177 Kooyong Road on the east side was 'Kenley' (north-east corner of Kooyong and Albany Roads) and abutting it to the south was 'Wombaleno', the carriage drives of which were both directly opposite No. 175 Kooyong Road. Immediately south and east were also 'Oma' ('Nareeb'), 'Inverbreakie', 'Maringa', 'Windsor' and 'Carmyle', on the corner of Malvern Road. The names of some mansions are reflected in today's street layout established after the subdivision of the original estates. Immediately south of No. 175 Kooyong Road on the west side was 'Valentines', then 'Woodbine', an unnamed residence and 'Larundel' on the corner of Devorgilla Avenue. Immediately west was 'Ottawa', then 'Norla' and 'Genista' which fronted Irving Road. North of Albany Road on the west side was 'Scotsburn', the estate of which extended to Toorak Road and on the east side was 'Yar Orrong' which also extended to Toorak Road. Many of the mansions remained until the inter-War years of the twentieth century.

At the time that No. 63 Albany Road ('Wandai', later 'Coomaroo') and its neighbours Nos. 175, 179, 177, 181 and 183 Kooyong Road were constructed, there were few residential buildings in Kooyong Road which were not on large estates. On the west side between Devorgilla Avenue and Malvern Road, opposite 'Carmyle', on land subdivided from the 'Devorgilla' estate in c.1890s and when 'Devorgilla' was also demolished², there were three Victorian style residences; 'Carthona' (extant), 'Beniara' (extant) and 'Wainui', which are of comparable size to No. 181 Kooyong Road. Immediately west of them was 'Marathon' which fronted Malvern Road and backed onto Devorgilla Avenue. From MMBW Plan No. 976, October, 1901, it appears that the land on which they were constructed had been subdivided from 'Marathon'.

In contrast to life in the mansions, life in the gentleman's villas has been less-well documented, however one resident of the houses in Kooyong Road, Jim Paxton, has shed some light. His house (No. 175 Kooyong Road) has been demolished.

"... we moved [from Clendon Road, Toorak] when I was about four years old to a rented house in Kooyong Road, near Albany Road, Toorak. This house was also a large Queen Anne villa. We employed a cook, housemaid and nurse, like most of my contemporaries I had a nurse until I was nine years old. ...

The villas were usually of red brick, in a style known as Queen Anne, with a long passage connecting the rooms on either side and such was the one we rented. Their appearance was deceptive as they were surprisingly deceptive as they were surprisingly roomy inside and averaged 30 to 40 squares in floor space.

Slate roofs were usual for large and small dwellings. French red tiles were popular but were seldom seen on mansions ...

Whether in mansions or villas all rooms had high ceilings of fifteen to twenty feet and elaborate plaster mouldings executed by master craftsmen. Every room had a fireplace for burning black coal and mantelpieces were usually finished in exquisitely carved marble [typically in Victorian houses]. Even the smaller houses, though less imposing, were equally well built and excellently finished with well-seasoned timber. Jerry-builders had not yet been born and shoddy workmanship was unknown [at least in Toorak].

Hand-carved woodwork was very popular and oak panelling was used extensively. Imported cedar, oak and red pine were used for interior woodwork until the less costly Tasmanian hardwoods became available. Cedar was often used for kitchen and pantry cupboards and other utility furniture, while mahogany, walnut and rosewood were always preferred for furnishing the main rooms. Then, as now, Australian red-gum was invariably used for fences. ...

Not all the streets were tree-lined but there were so many trees growing, in private gardens and on the large open spaces between them, that the overall impression was distinctly rural. Toorak was almost the backblocks in comparison with South Yarra. ... Footpaths were of asphalt, with grass nature strip, but the roads were rough and unsealed. Streets were still gas-lit. ...

Houses were lit with gas and portable kerosene lamps.”³ [Commentary added].

Early survey

Kooyong Road was a government road first surveyed in 1837. It was originally called Macarthur Road, although Betty Malone states that in the 1850s this applied to the section near Dandenong Road, but sometime before 1858 it was renamed Boundary Road by the Prahran Council.⁴

After Samuel Jackson's land (Crown Portion 26), was subdivided in 1872, it and Albany Road, previously called The Quadrant, was created.

Boundary Road to Malvern Road, accessed via a track, was used as an alternative route to Gardiner's Creek Road (Toorak Road) which challenged travellers heading east who had to negotiate a sharp drop, a swamp, a creek and then the steep rise to the Glenferrie Hill. Albany Road, formerly The Quadrant, may have followed the alignment of the track.⁵

Place Names

The name 'Kooyong' was taken from Kooyong Koot Creek, now Gardiner's Creek, which was named by the Government Surveyor Robert Hoddle in 1837. "It is thought that the name derives from an Aboriginal word meaning camp or resting place, or haunt of the wild fowl.⁶ Toorak Road was previously called Gardiner's Creek Road.

Land ownership

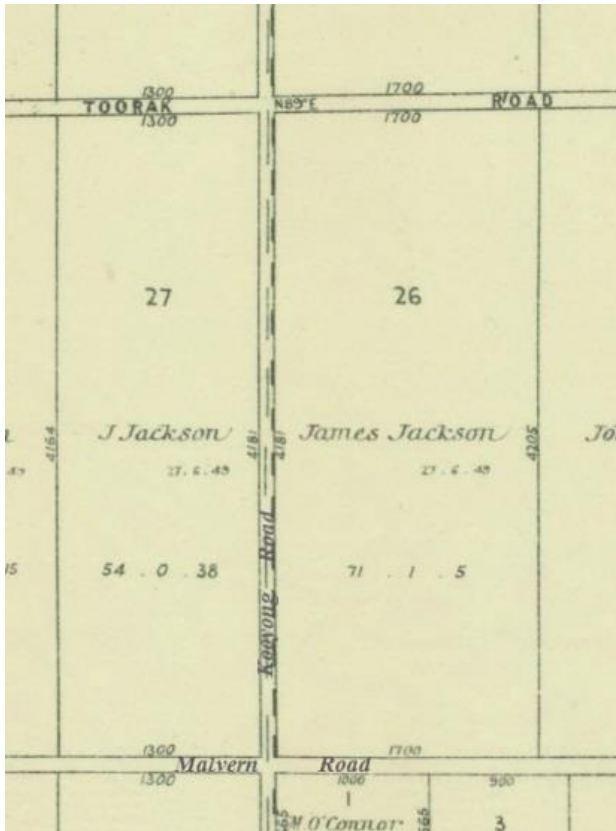
No. 63 Albany Road, Toorak is part of Crown Portion 27, Parish of Prahran, County of Bourke. Portion 27 was originally 50 ¼ acres (20.33 hectares) was first purchased by James Jackson, merchant and soap manufacturer, for £5.5.0 per acre in 1849.⁷

Jackson and his partner, James Rae, sold the land mostly to Alfred Ross who was a partner to William Westgarth. Subsequently the land was re-subdivided and with the advent of good public transport; half-hourly trains between the City and Oakleigh through Toorak and Armadale stations and a cable tram along Toorak Road "as far as the Presbyterian Church".⁸

Historian Betty Malone notes that

Lot 27 was subdivided quite differently from the lots on the east side [of Kooyong Road] which can be compared with the estates that grew up along Irving Road. The land that lay between Toorak, Albany and Kooyong Roads was split into two large estates – Myoora (west) and Scotsburn (at the Boundary Road end). Another large block, Devorgilla lay at the Malvern Road end and stretched right down to Irving Road. In between the blocks were much smaller, they were suitable for gentlemen's residences but not for large estates. Because of the irregularity of the Irving road holdings, the depths of the Boundary Road lots varied. Ottawa, near Albany Road, was a very large property and the six allotments ... [in]

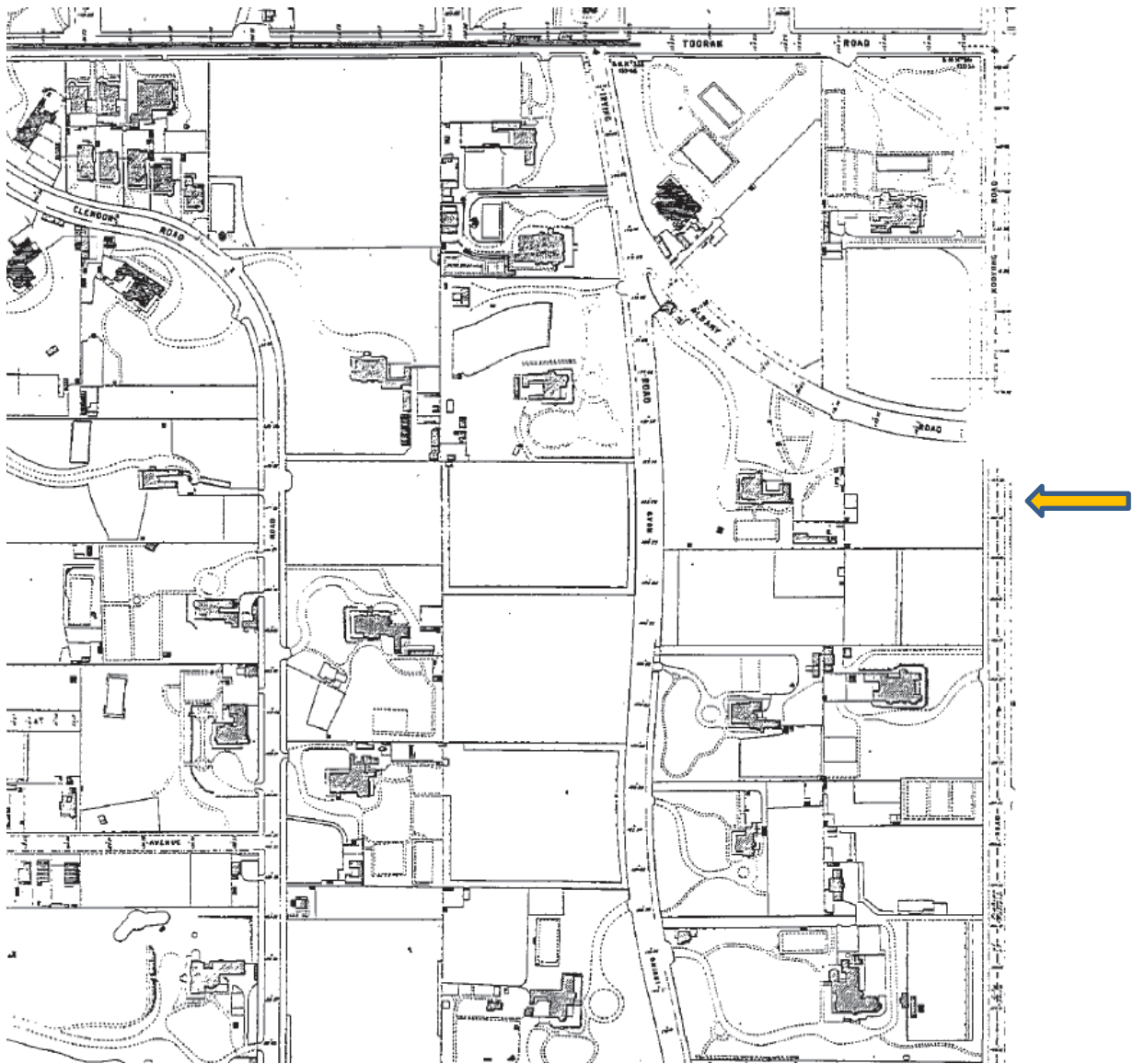
Boundary Road that lay behind the row of pines on Ottawa's eastern boundary, were generally smaller than those further to the south.⁹



Jackson's original land holding.

By 1888 A strip of land on the west side of Boundary Road, running south from Albany Road, with a frontage of 491.0/2 feet and a depth of 200 – 198.7 feet (9,123 square metres), described as “two acres one rood, four perches and three tenths of a perch or thereabouts” was owned by James Grice, merchant of Flinders Lane, Melbourne.¹⁰ On 25 September, 1888, Grice acquired the land from Charles Myles Officer, owner of ‘Ottawa’, who had subdivided off the land fronting Kooyong Road from a parcel of land he had acquired from Alexander Robertson in 1874.¹¹ Grice lived across the road from ‘Ottawa’ at ‘Oma’ (Nareeb) which he appears to have used as a town house and with his principal residence being at ‘Moondah’, Frankston. Amongst other connections, Officer was also a pastoralist with a connection to the Wimmera like Grice and a Presbyterian like Walter Murray Buntine. The Mount Talbot run was opened for selection in 1866 and Officer set about buying the necessary sections of Mount Talbot as they came up for sale. He had trouble with various ‘sharks’ who bought lots crucial to the squatter and forced him to pay dearly for them. Officer finally gained freehold of 16,756 acres (6781 ha). The financial strain of acquiring the freehold of Mount Talbot and losses from drought on his West Darling holdings gave him a worrying time. On 25 June 1897 he was declared bankrupt in New South Wales.¹²

These financial difficulties appear to have been instrumental in the subdivision. His purchase of 11 acres of land from A W Robertson was recorded in the press in 1882 for £28,000 with the comment “This is said to be the largest ‘figure’ ever realised for any suburban property in Victoria”.¹³ Presumably he still had to build the mansion during the Boom. In any event Officer was in financial trouble and when he died in 1904 he left numerous debts to shopkeepers, suppliers and professional men. His son William also had considerable debts.¹⁴



MMBW Plan. C. 1895 showing the land subdivided from 'Ottawa' (left) and as yet undeveloped.

James Grice was a son of Richard Grice, one of Australia's most prominent pastoralists, and brother of Sir John Grice, pastoralist, public figure and philanthropist. James Grice was a pastoralist in the Wimmera region and was connected with the firm of Messrs, Grice, Sumner & Co., the family company. The firm was "one of the oldest and foremost mercantile houses in the Australian colonies. By 1874 the firm also held large stations in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland and shipped guano from Malden Island (Pacific) until 1914".¹⁵ In addition to holding other board positions of prominent companies James Grice was also "a foundation member of the Victorian Amateur Turf Club, and was a member of the committee for many years. He was elected chairman of the club in 1888, in 1893 and from 1896 to 1906 inclusive" and continued until his retirement 1930. He died in 1932.¹⁶

On 10 March, 1898 a Walter Murray, in fact Walter Murray Buntine, of Booran Road, Caulfield, a gentleman, is recorded as the proprietor of the land bounded by Albany and Kooyong Roads.

Despite the Caulfield address, Buntine was already familiar with Toorak. Initially leasing but evidently later purchasing "Wynnstay" near Toorak Station, he set up his first school Hawksburn Grammar School.¹⁷ Walter Murray Buntine became a much respected and well-known master, also owner and later principal, of Caulfield Grammar School who had many educational interests and posts including

membership of the Council of the University of Melbourne in 1933-37, the Schools Board in 1919-22 and 1926-33, the Standing Committee of Convocation in 1926-33, the University Extension Board in 1912-21, the faculty of education in 1926-34, and the Council of Public Education in 1935-38. In 1935 he represented the State government and the university at the Fifth International Congress on Family Education in Geneva. In 1909 he helped to found Ridley College and was first secretary of its council 1909-22 and a member until 1953. In 1924-50 he was one of the two London representatives on the Commonwealth Council of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Australia and in 1938 he was elected a life governor. "Walter Murray Buntine grew from being a good schoolmaster into an educationalist of world-wide repute".¹⁸ Buntine died at his home at 181 Kooyong Road, Toorak after a short illness in 1953, aged 86.¹⁹ He left a considerable estate and numerous legacies to charities and Christian organisations with which he had been associated and also Caulfield Grammar School.

On 2 October, 1899 "Walter Murray" is recorded as the proprietor of four blocks south of Albany Road comprising "one acre and fifteen perches or thereabouts".²⁰ Horace Webber, Caulfield Grammar School historian, noting Buntine's outstanding "financial acumen and business sense" wrote "No one had a surer eye for property or a quicker eye for an opportunity than Buntine".²¹

On 9 October, 1899 part of the land was transferred to Mary Tolson (northernmost block abutting Albany Road)²² and another part to Charles Christie Graham (abutting block to the south) on 10 August, 1903. It appears that James Tolson financed Murray's purchase as a mortgage was discharged on 2 October, 1899. Murray variously retained most of the remainder of the land until 1914.

The Prahran Rate Book for 1897-98 records vacant land of "1.1.16", presumably acres, roods and perches with a Nett Annual value of £56.

Construction of the Residence

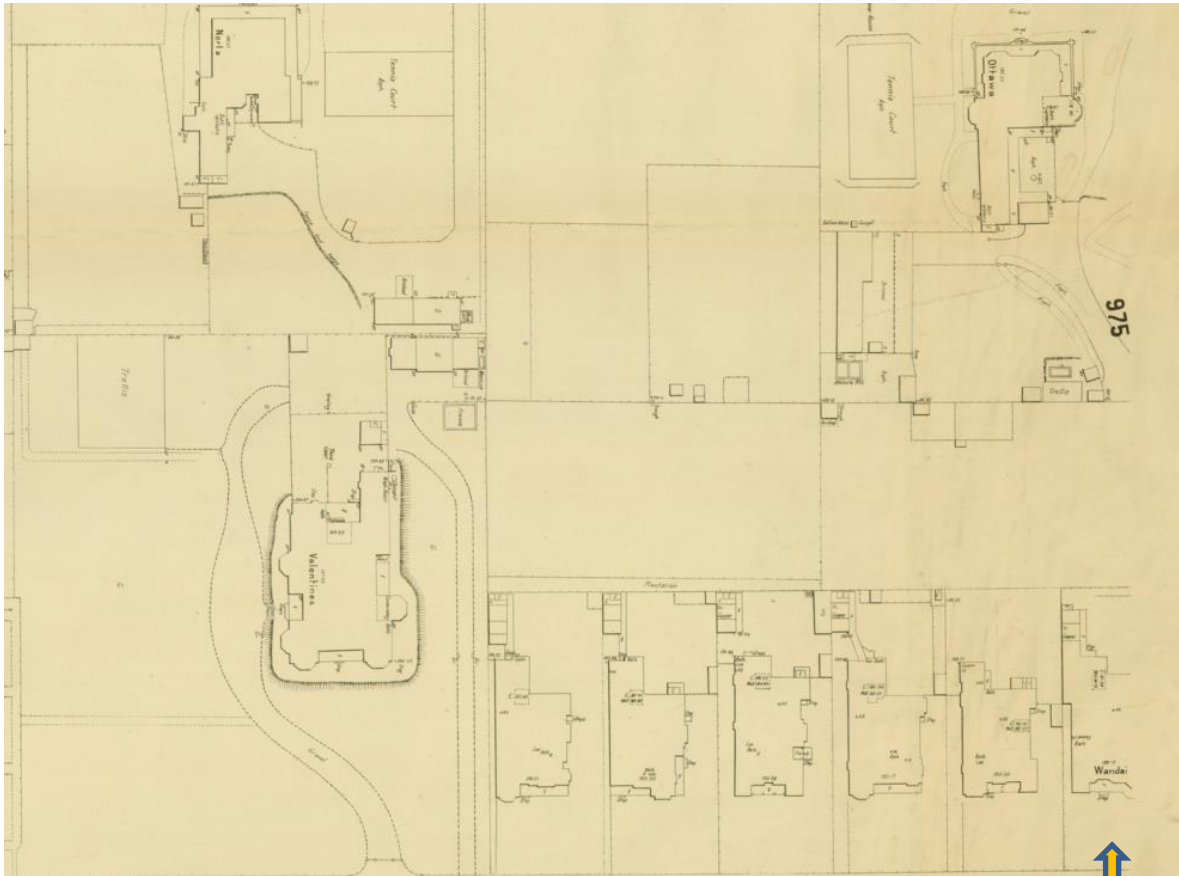
The Prahran Rate Book for 1898-99 records Walter Murray as having five houses and a block of vacant land.

Rate Book No.	Occupier	Owner	Building description	NAV £
878	George Officer, Gentleman	Walter Murray	B12, Land 80x200	£20 crossed out and changed to £100
879	Robert Cornish, Gentleman	Walter Murray	B12, Land 80x200	£20 crossed out and changed to £100
880	George J E Clark, Gentleman	Walter Murray	B12, Land 80x200	£20 crossed out and changed to £100
881		Walter Murray	B12, Land 80x200	£20 crossed out and changed to £100
882	Vacant land	Walter Murray	Land 80x200	£24
883		Walter Murray	B14, Land 80x200	£36 crossed out and changed to £100

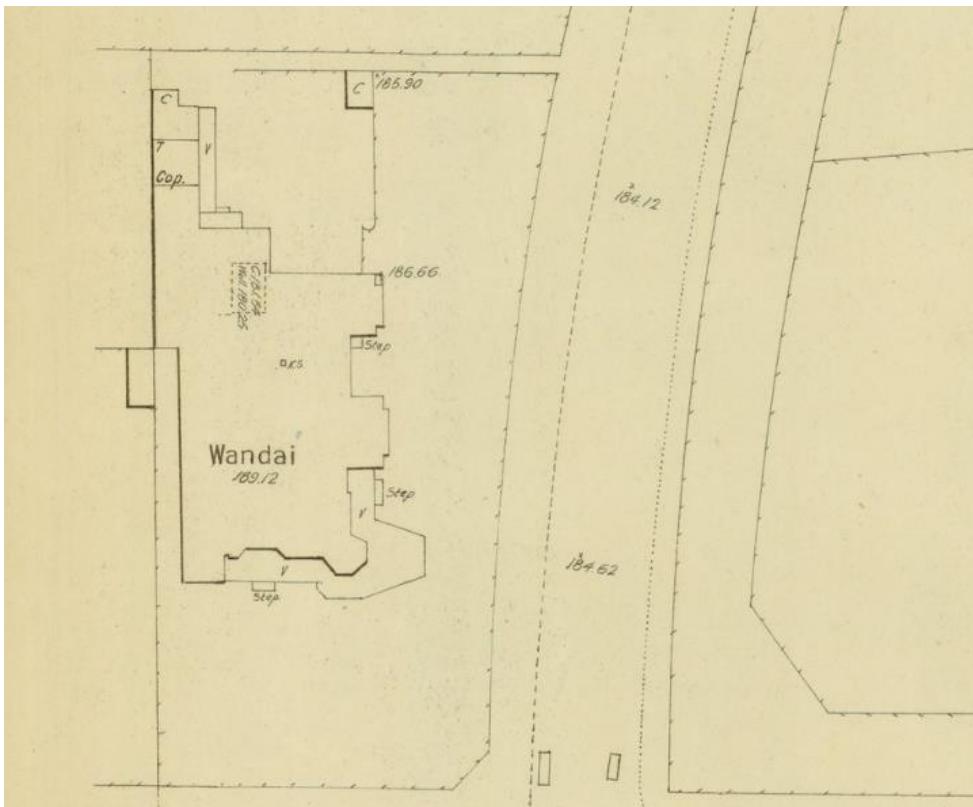
A brick house of 14 rooms i.e. No. 63 Albany Road was constructed between March 1898 and some time in 1899 and was called 'Wandai'.

The MMBW Plan No. 976, dated October, 1901 (40':1") shows 'Valentine's', 'Ottawa' and six houses fronting Kooyong Road extending from the north boundary of 'Valentine's to Albany Road.

From the left on MMBW Plan No. 976, No. 175 Kooyong Road was named 'Warragul', No. 177 was named 'Maroondah' and No. 179 was named 'Quantock'. 'Wandai' (originally No. 185 Kooyong Road but now No. 63 Albany Road) was also spelt 'Wandia', which was an error. No original name has been found for No. 181 Kooyong Road but it is now called 'Helenslea'.



MMBW Plan No. 976, October, 1901.



MMBW Plan No. 975, October, 1905. 40':1". Enlarged.

Historically the subdivision and Murray/Buntine's and Tolson's houses are demonstrative of an early subdivision of part of one of the mansion estates, a phase of development which became widespread in the twentieth century and which led to the breaking up and demolition of almost all of the great mansions which characterised the prestigious nature of the area. James Paxton records that Sir Frank Gavan Duffy, KCMG, prominent Melbourne barrister, High Court Judge and Chief Justice and Privy Councillor lived at 'Wandai'.²³

In 1901, all of the residences still had closets on the rear boundary abutting wash-houses – some are marked as having troughs and coppers but probably all had them and Nos. 177 and 179 Kooyong Road had an additional external closet abutting the rear wall. They all had internal lavatories (washbasins) and baths and kitchen sinks.

The only Property Sewerage Plan (No. 60435) for 63 Albany Road which exists refers to MMBW Plan No. 975, which was copyrighted 26 September, 1905, but the works shown on the Plan are recent. On the MMBW Plan 'Wandai' is shown as still having closets and a washhouse and a well. Nevertheless it is most likely that this property was also connected to the MMBW sewerage system at the same time as Nos. 175, 177, 179 and 181 which was in 1903 about four years after the houses were constructed. In 1903 the MMBW included Toorak/Armada as a new area in its sewerage rollout and invited architects to "inspect".

To date no photographs prior to 1929 have been found and no architect has been identified as having designed the house at 63 Albany Road, Toorak. There are no drawings in the State Library of Victoria and the City of Prahran reportedly threw out old architectural drawings in the 1960s. Due to similar historical circumstances and indeed building type, for many buildings, dwellings in particular, which have heritage significance, no architect or designer is able to be identified for 63 Albany Road, Toorak due to lack of documentation.

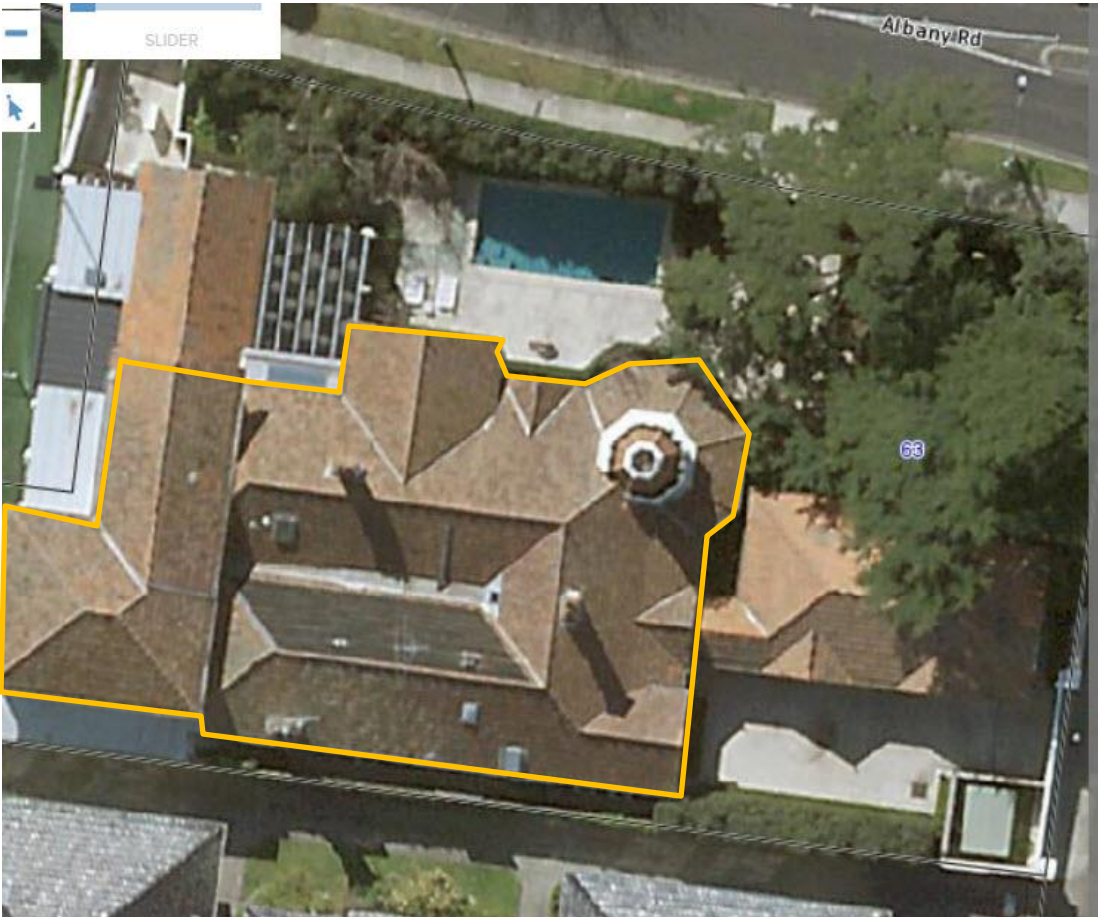
In the quest to find an architect, an extensive search has been made through the *Australian Architectural Index*. The only notices which have any relevance is a tender notice in the *Building Engineering and Mining Journal* called by Sydney Smith and Ogg for "four brick villas in Boundary Road, Armadale", which was accepted in April 1896.²⁴ Toorak was previously considered part of Armadale and Kooyong Road was previously Boundary Road at the time of the construction of the villas. This does not appear to include 'Wandai'.

Another tender notice in the *Building Engineering and Mining Journal* (BEMJ) called by Sydney Smith and Ogg on 22 July, 1899 was for "three large residences in Kooyong Road, Caulfield".²⁵ This does not include 'Wandai'. No other entries perused in the *Australian Architectural Index* shed any further light. George Tibbits also highlights possible candidates including Usher and Kemp, and Walter Butler, who had several commissions in Irving Road and nearby but also notes that much of the architectural work of the Federation era remains anonymous.

Description & Integrity

The site was inspected from the street in December 2015 and January 2016 but there is limited visibility above a high masonry wall and a hedge. The property was subdivided and an extensive renovation was undertaken in 2008 by Len Warson, property developer of Glenwill Homes and then the neighbour.²⁶ Despite this, the key elements remain.

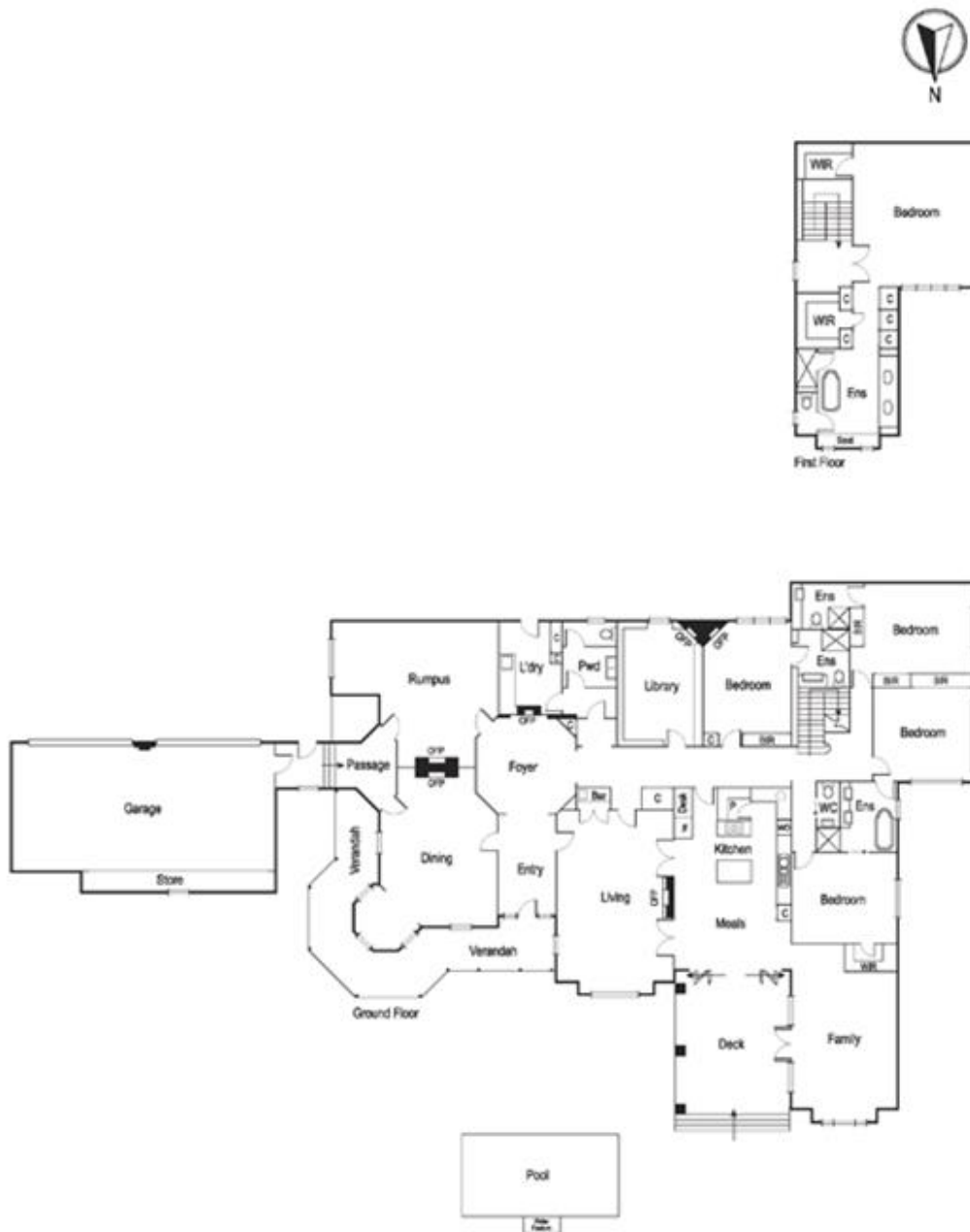
No. 63 Albany Road is a single storey, red brick villa, most likely tuckpointed, which was originally rectangular in plan but which is now L-shaped as a consequence of additions. The remaining original plan form is highlighted below. The rear wing, left of the pergola, originally projected as far as the wing to the right (east) and appears to have been extended. There is an addition at the east end adjacent to Kooyong Road which is a garage and which appears to be semi-detached or minimally connected to the verandah.



Aerial view with original plan form highlighted. City of Stonnington GIS.



The façade, or north elevation. (Source: Kay and Burton)



Plan of No. 63 Albany Road, Toorak. (Source: Kay and Burton)

The plan form is typical of a Federation villa with the main entrance from the side i.e. from Albany Road when the address was Kooyong Road; octagonal foyer, canted bay and a turret at a prominent corner, creating a diagonal axis to the L-shaped plan. The part of the house which is within the original plan form is the rumpus, dining, entry foyer (vestibule), living, laundry, powder and two bedrooms, the library and the meals area. The north wall and bay window of what was most likely the original dining room, now the meals area, has been demolished. The family room is an addition, as is the deck and the double storey bedroom wing in the north-west corner. The rear wing in the south-west corner of the site is where the washhouse and closet were located. The plan form expresses the hierarchy of the principal rooms i.e. the present dining and living rooms, vestibule and hallway all of which are emphasised by the ridges and the turret.

The façade (north elevation) is dominated by a faceted and crenellated turret, clad in terracotta tiles, set above a deep moulded and panelled cornice and terminating in a cast iron crown (cresting) surmounted above another deep moulded cornice. The north ridge is prominent on the skyline and

draws the eye further along (west) to three gables, the larger two of which have terracotta finials. The small gable is infilled with strapwork (half-timbering) and probably stuccoed panels. The larger central gable appears to have similar detailing but also contains a pair of small windows or vents, and is set on corbels (jettied). These elements create the impression of a slight oversail of the wall below which contains what appears to be a stuccoed frieze. The bargeboards are set on curved timber brackets. The gable to the west appears similar but may have only one window or vent. One large brick chimney, which is the living room chimney, with a corbelled cap and decorative stucco strapwork is visible. Four chimneys are extant. The visible ridges have terracotta cresting.

The verandah roof is integral with the principal roof form and sweeps down to the perimeter of the verandah which is timber-framed, with the valence in an open square pattern and timber brackets to the posts. The verandah floor appears to be in brown tessellated tiles. The deep setback behind the verandah makes the walls less prominent. The walls are red brick, probably tuckpointed and set on a bluestone plinth. They are delineated by two bands of stucco: one at sill height and the other at approximately the mid-point of the windows. The window sashes in the bay window under the main gable comprises a group of four timber-framed casements with leadlight highlights and scalloped decorative panels beneath. The window sashes to the canted bay under turret are timber-framed casements and elsewhere under the verandah they appear to be elongated timber-framed, double-hung sash windows. Window and door sills are probably bluestone.

West of the main gable is a pergola and deck behind which (south) is an operable wall (folding doors). Originally this area was a wall. Probably containing windows, which was set back from the bay window of the living room and the rear wing which contains a bedroom and family room. The family room is an addition. At the rear in the south-west corner is also a double storey section, all of which is most probably an addition.

There is a vehicle entrance from Kooyong Road and a pedestrian entrance from Albany Road.



The back portion of the house as viewed from Albany Road.



The entrance vestibule looking towards the entrance. (Source: Kay and Burton)

The interiors are very much as described by James Paxton. The ceilings of the present dining and living rooms at least, are set out in moulded panels and with moulded cornices below, and in the dining room there is a frieze area above presumed timber picture rails. This room also has a decorative, simple "carved" timber screen at the south end which creates a type of inglenook, or alcove. The rumpus room also has a timber screen which creates a type of inglenook behind the window.

The entrance vestibule appears to have retained its fireplace, and possibly the mantel, grate and hearth, located opposite the entrance door. Inside the entrance is a timber panelled dado, with a moulded dado rail and a deep moulded cornice. The floor boards appear to be original. The entrance doorcase is timber with a tripartite highlight window and sidelights in leadlight which appears to be Victorian in style. Beneath the sidelights are timber panels. The door has six panels. Internal door openings have moulded timber architraves and the door to the living room, which was probably the original dining room, at least has five panels. In the centre of the main upper panel is another panel with timber mouldings extending to the perimeter mouldings of the panel. This design is similar to doors in 'Stonnington', Glenferrie Road, Malvern and may have been French polished or had painted decoration such as a design in the panel.

The "turret" room, probably the original drawing room, is the most elaborate room in the house now. The plan form of the rumpus and drawing rooms appear to be original and contains a secondary entrance to the house, and individually to each room from the east elevation (Kooyong Road). There appears to always have been direct access from the garden. The doors are half-glazed and with highlights and all infilled with leadlight. The timber-framed windows are casement with decorative highlights containing leadlight.

The drawing room shares a chimney breast and flu with the rumpus room and has retained what appears to be the original timber mantel, tiled grate and hearth. The panelled ceiling is panelled out with strapwork and there is a shallow cornice below which is a deep frieze and a moulded picture rail which is presumably timber. The decorative plaster vent cover(s) is also probably original.

The timber-framed windows are casements with decorative highlights containing leadlight.



This room is probably the original drawing room. (Source: Kay and Burton)



Detail of the room under the turret.

(Source: <http://federation-house.wikispaces.com/Melbourne%27s+Federation+Heritage>)

The alcove under the turret is framed by square pilasters, set on a slight angle, which have foliated moulded capitals and staff beads beneath a moulded arch with a keystone and recessed panels to the soffit in the Victorian Classical style.



This room may have been a bedroom and is now the rumpus room. (Source: Kay and Burton)



This room was probably the original dining room. Note the decorative detailing to the door on the right which is off the vestibule. (Source: <http://federation-house.wikispaces.com/Federation+Excellence>)

The rumpus room has retained its deep moulded timber skirting, timber screen, and the frieze and cornice also appear to be original. The decorative plaster vent cover is also probably original. It is not clear whether or not the plaster ceiling is panelled out. The timber flooring may be original or a replacement. The chimney breast is behind the camera and the original mantel, grate and hearth may be extant. The timber-framed windows are casements with decorative highlights containing leadlight.

The dining room has a panelled ceiling, frieze containing presumably decorative vent covers, above a presumed moulded timber picture rail. Moulded timber skirting also appear original. The timber flooring may be original or a replacement. The timber-framed windows are casements with decorative highlights containing Victorian style leadlight. The chimney breast has staff beads to the salient corners and the polished timber mantel and grate appear to be original. The hearth is probably original and tiled.



This room was a bedroom but has been converted to a library. (Source: Kay and Burton)

This room above was probably a bedroom or may have been the dressing room and has been re-fitted out as a library. The raked chimney breast in the right hand corner is original and the cast iron grate may be original. The timber mantel appears to have been installed as part of the library fitout. It is not clear if the ceiling is original or not. The timber-framed double-hung sash window is appropriate as a window type in this location at the back of the house. The timber floor may be original.



This room is a bedroom on the first floor. The en suite is on the right. It does not appear to be original and in any event has no features of the era of the house. (Source: Kay and Burton)

The exterior of the dwelling and the principal interiors are demonstrative of the Federation style while the original drawing room combines typical Victorian and Edwardian detailing. The principal rooms appear to be highly intact. They are of interest in demonstrating the transition between the two styles and the continued availability of Victorian mouldings, joinery and hardware. Interiors of this type are not numerous and are consequently rare. While having undergone alterations, the principal elements of this dwelling remain intact and it is able to shed some light on architectural taste and fashion around the turn of the nineteenth century. The house also demonstrates the high level of appointment and comfort which was appropriate for the professional and/or gentleman class and in comparison with the more elaborate mansions which were still the main residential form in this part of Toorak when this house and its neighbours were constructed.

An auction notice published in 1907 set out the features of 'Wandai':

Thursday, 21st February

At Rooms. At Half-past 2 o'Clock

'Wandai'

Boundary and Albany Roads,

Toorak

C.J and T. Ham are instructed by the owner to sell by public auction, as above,

Land, having a frontage of 90 ft. to Boundary- road by a depth of over 200 ft. along Albany- road, on which is erected that

Superb Villa Residence,

Known as "Wandai" and containing handsome entrance hall, three spacious reception rooms, four bedrooms, dressing room, servant's hall, kitchen, two servant's rooms, two bathrooms, scullery, laundry, larder, cellar, &c.

This is without doubt one of the most attractive, fully equipped, tastefully finished and lavishly appointed villas in Toorak, and occupies an exceedingly choice position, elevated, and in a select neighbourhood, within 6 minutes' walk of the tram terminus.

Terms, ¼ cash, balance at 6, 12 and 18 months at 4 ½ per cent, with right to pay off at any time, or cash at option of purchaser.

For further particulars of title apply to Messrs. Blake and Riggall, solicitors, 120 William-street, and for orders to view, &c. to the auctioneers, 75 Swanston-street.²⁷

Another advertisement for the auction claimed that 'Wandai' was 'recognised as ONE of the LOVELIEST VILLAS in the district'.²⁸

The house was described recently by one real estate agent as:

'Albany Road - The Ultimate Luxury'

Located in Toorak's finest street.

This splendid period home set in a botanic garden has been extensively refurbished with meticulous attention to detail restoring this grand home to its former glory.

"Coomaroo" comprises: 5 bedrooms (3 with lavish ensuites) a grand entry, extensively fitted study, elegant formal sitting and dining rooms, powder room, family and meals area with extensive use of glass, an abundance of natural light and stone Meile kitchen with emporite cupboards Features : 4 car garage, heating/cooling, swimming pool, security system, cellar and ample storage.

Land size 14,000 sq ft. (1294m2) approx.²⁹

Land at the rear was subdivided off when the property was last sold.³⁰

Comparative Analysis

The main architectural styles are set out in *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture*³¹ and a more detailed and useful description of the typical characteristics of the Queen Anne Style was put forward by the late George Tibbits:

Large numbers of houses in Melbourne are described as being in the Queen Anne style. They are distinctive in their picturesque outline, their decorative detail and their colour. They share a basic set of materials: red bricks for walls, turned timber for verandah and porch supports, half timbering with rough cast in the gables, orange terra cotta tiles and decorative terra cotta terminations on the roof. Many of their windows are treated with stained or coloured glass. Externally they profess a link with the English Domestic Revival and internally there is an affinity with Arts and Crafts ideals. The genre flourished in the first decade of the twentieth century but had its origins in the later 1880s and the 1890s. As a popular building-style it continued up to the First World War. While much of the work remains anonymous, many examples were designed by well-trained and talented architects; perhaps the great majority of the houses will eventually be linked with architects and designer-builders. Their very variety suggests that many designers must have been involved. Because of their date, numerous examples are found in the intermediate suburbs of Melbourne, although some fine isolated examples are located in the older inner suburbs. The houses in each suburb have their own distinctive character which suggests that groups of designer-builders concentrated their efforts in one area. The exception to this is the work of some of the leading architects, examples of whose work are scattered throughout various suburbs, but even with these architects there seem to be concentrations of their work in a number of areas and only isolated examples in other areas.³²

Within the City of Stonnington, is the Gascoigne Estate which is considered to be a prime example of numerous houses designed in the Queen Anne or more correctly, the Federation style. Regardless of the name, the important point is that the style, according to George Tibbits, is "a distinctly

Australian style, even a distinctly Melbourne style³³ and this adds importance to the choice of this style for No. 63 Albany Road and its neighbours.

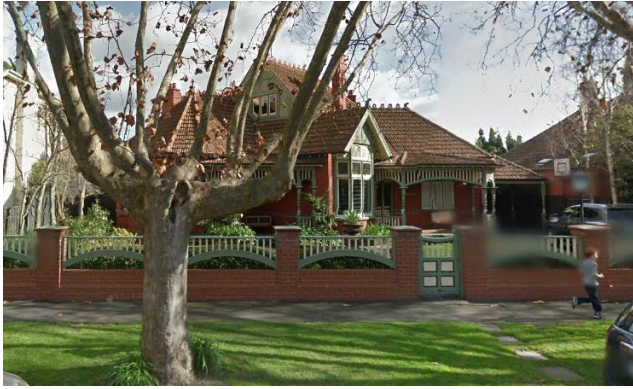
Construction began on the Gascoigne Estate in 1888 and was interrupted by the 1890s Depression but resumed in 1899 and continued until World War I. Like houses on the Gascoigne Estate, No. 63 Albany Road shares a history with its neighbours to the south and exhibits some similar architectural characteristics within the range of the Federation style which are readily apparent in the streetscape. In this sense the individual buildings reinforce each other in creating a distinctive setting in Kooyong Road. On his plan of this part of Toorak, James Paxton noted them as "Queen Anne Houses" while noting other properties variously by their names and/or owners, which suggests that this is how they were known in the district and before street numbers were introduced.³⁴ However, importantly 'Wandai' also has different and distinctive characteristics principally the turret.

While Victorian mansions often had towers, there are few examples of Federation houses with turrets in the Gascoigne Estate Precinct, Malvern (HO133), the Prospect Hill Precinct, Camberwell (HO159), the Grace Park and Hawthorn Grove Precincts, Hawthorn (HO152), the Armadale Precinct (HO130) and Albert and Middle Parks (Middle Park and St Kilda West Precinct, HO444) all of which have a concentration of Federation style dwellings. The size of the allotments also has influenced the design of the individual dwellings with those in Albert and Middle Park, and to a degree Armadale, generally being narrower and without prominent rear transverse gables as compared with the wider and deeper sites in Camberwell, Malvern and Hawthorn. In addition, it is evident that in most of these areas many of the designs are repetitive or are very similar, suggestive of Tibbitts "designer-builders", and range from reasonably modest Federation terrace rows, semi-detached pairs and villas, interspersed with some very large, elaborate and often unique residences which stand out. Many of these were or would have been architect-designed for a wealthier clientele.

While some of the Federation style dwellings have one or perhaps two details which are very similar, no exact comparisons have been identified and No. 63 Albany Road would appear to be unique in that no other crenelated turrets or turrets crested with cast iron have been located. Federation turrets are either faceted round or more pyramidal and form part of the verandah or they may include a room or form a belvedere; they might have a deep embellished cornice below the roof or no cornice at all, or the cornice might include fenestration; they might have terracotta tiled roofs or, in the case of the candle snooper type, be clad in metal with different profiles including fish scales or plain. If not unique, the turret at No. 63 Albany Road is impressive and is a local landmark addressing the corner of a prominent site.



63 Albany Road, Toorak



Gascoigne Estate, 11 Finch Street, Malvern East



Gascoigne Estate, Finch Street, East Malvern



Corner Sorrett Avenue and Glenferrie Roads, Malvern



Grace Park, Hawthorn



Grace Park, Hawthorn



27 The Broadway, Camberwell (Right). (Prospect Hill)



Corner of The Broadway and Berwick St, Camberwell (Prospect Hill)



The Broadway, Camberwell (Prospect Hill)



100 Park Street, Albert Park
Source: <https://federation-house.wikispaces.com>



Cnr Royal Crescent and Munro Street, Armadale



Cnr Glassford Street and Kooyong Road, Armadale



Cnr Glassford Street and Kooyong Road, Armadale



'Kira', 27 Balwyn Road, Camberwell (Ussher & Kemp)
(HO168)

Source: <http://federation-house.wikispaces.com/>



'Travancore', 608 Riversdale Road, Camberwell.
(Ussher & Kemp) (HO182)

Source: <http://federation-house.wikispaces.com/>



'Edzell', 76 St Georges Road, Toorak. (Walter Butler, 1917 alterations) (VHR H0691)
Source: <http://federation-house.wikispaces.com/>



'Auld Reeki', 511 Royal Parade, Parkville. (1910) (VHR H0438)
Source: <http://federation-house.wikispaces.com/>

One of the known architectural firms associated with the Gascoigne Estate was Ussher and Kemp and George Tibbits has identified two groups of designs within their oeuvre:

those with a roof composed entirely of gables; and those with a roof formed by an overall hip from which gables protrude.³⁵

No. 63 Albany Road fits in with the second group. In discussing the work of Ussher and Kemp and with reference to the Gascoigne Estate and other examples, the main features of the Federation Style hipped group noted by George Tibbits are typically, but not necessarily universally:

- roofs are formed by an overall hip from which gables protrude
- principal gable emphasises externally the principal axis of the room it expresses
- creation of asymmetrical compositions in which the external elements reflect the internal spaces required great skill in planning and massing
- surface of the hip roof is continuous with the roofs of any verandahs and porches associated with the house
- chimneys make an important picturesque contribution to the roofscape
- walls, especially in a two storey design... were dominant elements and were carefully treated as a visually important aspect of the design
- walls in the hipped genre rising no higher than the ground floor eaves
- perimeter being softened with screens of turned timber posts and arched infills to the porches and verandahs
- principal sets of casement windows are contained within flat segmented arches
- "it is the sweep of the roof, the subsidiary gables, the finials and cresting, and, above all, the colour and texture of the original Marseilles tiles, which dominates the eye"
- "The character of the hipped genre house is softer, more decorative, and intimate, in contrast with the prismatic form and sublime austerity of their gabled counterparts"
- Internal Arts and Crafts characteristics include orientation of the house, expression of interior plan forms in the exterior timber panelling and carved decorations, the coloured glass floral compositions in the windows, the finely designed door furniture, and the variety of decorative plaster work.³⁶

It is evident that the architectural characteristics displayed at No. 63 Albany Road accord with *The Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture* and George Tibbits' analysis of key elements and also that within the Federation style individual designs, detailing and materials varied; and not every Federation style dwelling will necessarily have all of these elements. In all of the Federation precincts there are numerous dwellings which stand out, principally because of distinctive and individual features which point to bespoke architectural design as distinguished from the more repetitive examples most likely created by the designer-builders. Given the good design, individual elements, quality and elaboration of the detailing, No. 63 Albany Road was most likely designed by an as yet unidentified architect, moreover since it was regarded as being "without doubt one of the most attractive, fully equipped, tastefully finished and lavishly appointed villas in Toorak, and occupies an exceedingly choice position, elevated, and in a select neighbourhood".

"Coomaroo" is included in an article "Top Federation Houses. Federation Houses of Fame" on the 'Federation-House' website.³⁷ Other houses in Victoria which are listed comprise 'Edzell', Toorak; 'Redcourt', 506 Orrong Road, Armadale; 'Idylwilde', 16 St Georges Road, Toorak; 'Eulinya', 48-50 Irving Road, Toorak; 'Little Milton', 26 Albany Road, Toorak; 'Bona Vista', 59 Kensington Road, South Yarra; 'Greystones', Park Street, Brighton (c.1914); 'Wee Nestie', 69 The Broadway, Camberwell (Prospect Hill Precinct); 'Avondale', 22 Berkeley Street, Hawthorn; 'Lenoma', 7 Chrystobel Crescent, Hawthorn (Grace Park Estate) and 'Purrumbete' 3551 Princes Highway, Camperdown". Several of these houses are on the *Victorian Heritage Register* or are in Heritage Overlay Areas. While they differ in style and size etc., this listing serves as a benchmark for 'Coomaroo' which compares well with those in a similar idiom.

Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes

No. 63 Albany Road, Toorak demonstrates the following themes:

Theme 06 Building towns, cities and the garden state.

Theme 6.3 Shaping the suburbs: Ring of 19th century inner suburbs.

Theme 6.7 Making homes for Victorians.

Homes for the wealthy: Nineteenth century mansions

Middle class homes Victorian and inter-war middle class villas

Assessment Against Criteria

Amended Heritage Victoria Criteria – Criteria adopted by the Heritage Council on 7 August 2008 pursuant to Sections 8(1) (c) and 8(2) of the Heritage Act 1995.

Criterion A - Importance to the course, or pattern, of the City of Stonnington's cultural history (historical significance).

The subdivision of part of 'Ottawa' and the design and construction of Walter Murray Buntine's houses and also 'Wandai' ('Coomaroo') are demonstrative of an early subdivision of part of one of the mansion estates, a phase of development which became widespread in the twentieth century and which led to the breaking up and demolition of almost all of the great mansions which characterised the prestigious nature of the area. The private subdivision of the land by Charles Officer, James Grice and Walter Murray Buntine, all prominent Melburnians, was one of the first expressions of the subdivision of the large estates and by the owner as compared to more typically by a development company. It is also a rare, almost unique, example of a villa development in the 1890s in this area where and when the mansions still dominated.

Criterion B - Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Stonnington's cultural history (rarity).

The design of No. 63 Albany Road is very much in the Federation style as identified by Apperly *et al.* and Tibbits. In addition, it is the only dwelling identified in the Heritage Overlay Areas noted as

having been predominantly developed in the Federation era which has a crenelated turret crowned with a low cast iron balustrade. It is noted as a local landmark.

Criterion C - Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Stonnington's cultural history (research potential)

Research into No. 63 Albany Road, and its neighbours to the south, has yielded new information about prominent Melburnians in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including local residents, and the effects of the economy which were to have a permanent effect on the carving up of the mansion estates in Toorak and Irving and Kooyong Roads in particular.

The interiors have a fusion of typical Victorian and Edwardian detailing and appear to be highly intact. There is potential, because of their intactness, to yield further information about historical decorative schemes of the Federation style, about which comparatively little is known presently.

Criterion D - Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects (representativeness).

No. 63 Albany Road clearly demonstrates the attitudes and expectations of the wealthier and fashionable classes who settled in Toorak originally and who continue to re-settle in the desirable and prestigious suburb thus confirming their social status.

Criterion E - Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).

The architectural characteristics of No. 63 Albany Road display a design flair which are both typical of the Federation style and which are also most probably unique. It is the only dwelling identified in the Heritage Overlay Areas, noted as having been predominantly developed in the Federation era, which has a crenelated turret crowned with a low cast iron balustrade, placed so as to be conspicuous and emphasising the corner site. It is noted as a local landmark.

Despite not having an identified architect, it is of a calibre which is indicative of a professional hand (architect).

Criterion F - Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period (technical significance).

N/A

Criterion G - Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of their continuing and developing cultural traditions (social significance).

The house demonstrates the high level of appointment and comfort which was appropriate for the professional and/or gentleman class at the turn of the nineteenth century and in comparison with the more elaborate mansions which were still the main residential form in this area when this house, and its neighbours, was constructed.

Criterion H - Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in City of Stonnington's history (associative significance).

The house is directly associated with James Grice and Walter Murray Buntine and also Charles Officer, all of whom lived in either the house or immediate proximity and whose land dealings were, for specific reasons, one of the first expressions of the subdivision of the large estates. For a time it was also the home of notable Australian Sir Frank Gavan Duffy, KCMG, and as such it is demonstrative of the social and professional classes which settled in Toorak.

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The single-storey Federation style brick villa at No. 63 Albany Road, Toorak. Externally it is a competent and early (1898-99) example of the Federation style, the development of which, from the 1880s, was interrupted by the 1890s Depression. It is individually distinguished amongst its peers in Stonnington and elsewhere by its crenelated turret crowned with a low decorative cast iron balustrade which is highly likely to be unique in Melbourne.

The interiors have typical Edwardian detailing and appear to be highly intact. Interiors of this era are less numerous and are consequently rarer than Victorian interiors, moreover highly intact ones.

Elements which are not of any significance are the front fence and gates, garage, swimming pool, structure/element in south-east corner, deck and addition (bedrooms) in the north-west corner.

How is it significant?

No. 63 Albany Road, Toorak is of local historical and aesthetic/architectural significance.

Why is it significant?

Historically the subdivision and Walter Murray Buntine's houses are demonstrative of an early subdivision of part of one of the mansion estates, a phase of development which became widespread in the twentieth century and which led to the breaking up and demolition of almost all of the great mansions which characterised the prestigious nature of the area. The private subdivision of the land from 'Ottawa' by Charles Officer, James Grice and Walter Murray Buntine, all prominent Melburnians, was one of the first expressions of the subdivision of the large estates and by the owner as compared more typically by a development company. It is also a rare, almost unique, example of a villa development in the 1890s in this area where and when the mansions still dominated.

It is also an example of a standard of accommodation appropriate for the gentleman class in an area which was dominated by the mansions of the super-rich.

It is also almost the last vestige of the late nineteenth century in Kooyong Road between Malvern and Toorak Roads and the immediate environs which were dominated by mansions and which is recalled in real-time by James Paxton.

The architectural characteristics displayed at No. 63 Albany Road accord with the principal characteristics of the Federation style. The design of this house is a well resolved and carefully designed composition which compares well with relevant examples in Stonnington. Federation-style dwellings with turrets are comparatively rare throughout Melbourne and this example is distinguished amongst its peers by its crenelated turret crowned with a low decorative cast iron balustrade which is highly likely to be unique in Melbourne. It is a local landmark.

Despite not having an identified architect, it is of a calibre which is indicative of a professional hand (architect) and the lack of an attribution does not diminish its significance.

The interiors of the principal rooms are highly original and intact and given that many examples of Federation villas which are comparable externally have had their interiors modernised, the interiors are quite rare. There is potential, because of their intactness and their level of appointment, to yield further information about historical decorative schemes of the Federation style, about which comparatively little is known presently.

Grading

Recommended grading: A2

No. 63 Albany Road, Toorak, is certainly a worthy candidate for inclusion in a Heritage Overlay and a grading of "A2" is clearly substantiated and warranted. The relevant definition in the *Revised City of Stonnington – Heritage Grading Definitions 2012* is:

A2 graded buildings have been assessed as buildings of high local significance. They will typically stand out as important milestones in the development of the region or municipality, and may illustrate one or more of the key local historical themes.

Some A2-buildings gain part of their significance from their location within a largely intact heritage precinct. Where an A2-graded building reinforces one or more of the key historical themes of the heritage precinct, its presence may enhance the significance of the heritage precinct.

Listed as No. 185 Kooyong Road, No. 63 Albany Road was graded 'A' in the *Prahran Conservation Study*, undertaken by Nigel Lewis in 1983.

Listed as No. 185 Kooyong Road, No. 63 Albany Road was graded 'A2' in a 'Level 2' streetscape in the *Prahran Conservation and Character Study*, 1992. The definition of an "A2" graded building is:

A2 Buildings are of regional or metropolitan significance, and stand as important milestones in the architectural development of the metropolis. Many will be either already included on, or recommended for inclusion on, the Register of the national Estate. (These are the equivalent of B graded buildings adopted by the City of Melbourne and a number of other Councils).

The architectural design is clearly within the Federation style and is competently handled and the fact that no architect can be attributed to this house does not diminish its aesthetic and architectural significance - there are many similar buildings where the same circumstance exists, indeed as George Tibbits noted that much of the work of the Federation era remains anonymous.

External paint colours	No
Internal Alterations Controls	No
Tree Controls	No
Outbuildings and fences not exempt	No
Victorian Heritage Register	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted	No
Incorporated plan	No
Aboriginal heritage place	No



Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 63 Albany Road, Toorak

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