

Former Malvern Dairy & Residence

37 – 39 Clarence Street, Malvern East



Heritage Assessment

August 2011

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1.0 Introduction

This report was commissioned by the City of Stonnington. It provides an assessment of the cultural heritage significance of the former Malvern Dairy, 37-39 Clarence Street, Malvern East, and provides comment on the appropriateness of a heritage control for the place.

2.0 Sources of Information

The analysis below draws upon an external inspection of the building and historical research using the Stonnington Local History Catalogue, Sands and McDougall Directories, and MMBW plans. The report also relies on secondary historical sources including the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006).



Figure 1 Map showing the location of the former Malvern Dairy, 37-39 Clarence Street, Malvern East. Source: Land Victoria Interactive Maps.

3.0 Listings and Controls

City of Stonnington

The site is not currently subject to a heritage overlay control, either as an individually significant building or as part of a precinct. It was graded 'D-E' in the *Malvern Urban Character Study* (Laceworks Landscape Collaborative, Graeme Butler Architectural Historian, 1989).

Heritage Victoria

The site is not included on the Victorian Heritage Register.

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

The site is not included on the National Trust Register of classified places

Australian Heritage Council

The site is not included on the Register of the National Estate as administered by the Australian Heritage Council.

4.0 History

Contextual History

In the early twentieth century, milk was delivered by horse drawn cart direct to Melbourne households where it was typically ladled into customers' billy cans. Lack of fast and effective refrigerated transport meant that a dairy could only serve a relatively small area. Hence dairies proliferated across suburban Melbourne. By 1920, there were some 700 milk shops and 823 carts employed at 401 dairies in the metropolitan area. Approximately twenty of these dairies were located in the Malvern area.¹

Dairies of the early twentieth century generally comprised a residence for the dairyman and his family, with small dairy to the rear as well as stables for the horses that pulled the delivery cart. Most dairies operated independently and there was little regulation of prices. Illness from contaminated milk was also a serious problem. The *Dairy Produce Act* of 1919 attempted to address these issues with new measures for milk testing, grading, pricing and inspection. The *Milk Supply Act* of 1922 introduced more stringent controls including compulsory cooling of milk at dairies. 'Model' suburban dairies were subsequently developed from the late 1920s in an attempt to improve hygiene.²

As late as 1920, dairy cows could still be found in metropolitan Melbourne, grazing on vacant railway reserve parklands, but most raw milk was transported by rail from rural dairy farms 60 kilometres or more distant from the city.³

The *Milk Board Act* of 1932 regulated metropolitan milk supplies and brought about the closure of many smaller independent dairies. The remaining dairies were forced to make improvements to their facilities. From 1951 the Milk Board

¹ J Penney and A Brown May, 'Dairying and Milk Supply', in *The Encyclopaedia of Melbourne*, p.193.

² J Penney and A Brown May, 'Dairying and Milk Supply', in *The Encyclopaedia of Melbourne*, p.193.

³ J Penney and A Brown May, 'Dairying and Milk Supply', in *The Encyclopaedia of Melbourne*, p.193.

purchased milk direct from farmers for resale to dairies for distribution. By the early 1960s there had been a significant reduction in the number of small dairies as larger companies such as Pura acquired suburban milk runs and opened new processing plants.

Malvern Dairy

The present residence at 39 Clarence Street is named 'Leomah' on a 1908 MMBW detail plan (see figure 2 below). It does not appear to have been associated with a dairy at this time but did have a small stables in the south west corner (since demolished). The site is first listed as a dairy in Sands and McDougall Directories in 1918 with William J Hill as occupant.⁴ By 1920, the property is listed as the Trevethan & Packman Dairy.⁵ A site plan prepared the following year shows the existing residence, with a dairy and cart shed in separate smaller building to the west (see figure 3 below).⁶ Stables were located in the south west corner of the property, hard up against the rear boundary.

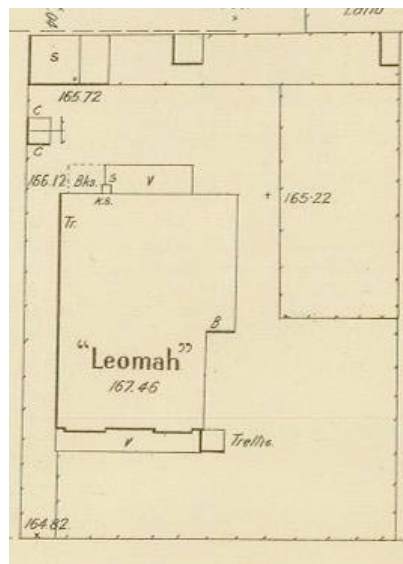


Figure 2 (left) A 1908 MMBW Detail Plan showing the residence at 39 Clarence Street. Source: State Library of Victoria

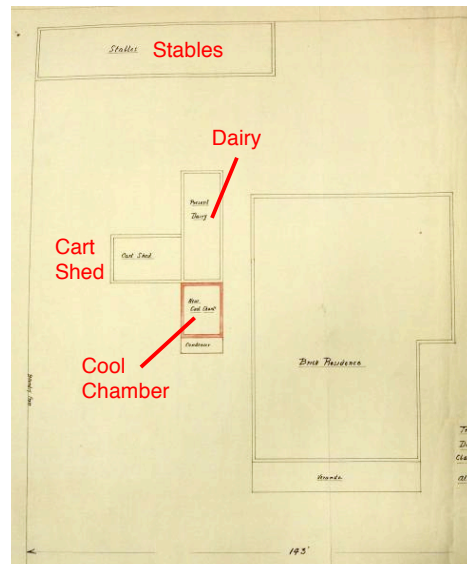


Figure 3 (right) A 1921 site plan. Source: Stonnington Local History Catalogue.

In November 1930 plans were drawn up on behalf of H. P. Butler for a new dairy, stables, cart shed, paving and fencing on the Clarence Street site.⁷ The drawings are stamped 'R Werner & Co. Refrigerating Engineers' although it is not clear if this firm were responsible for the design of the new buildings or just the installation of refrigeration plant. All of the earlier dairy buildings on the site were demolished at this time with the exception of the can wash.

⁴ Sands and McDougall Directories.

⁵ Sands and McDougall Directories.

⁶ Stonnington Local History Catalogue. Registration number. MB1889.

⁷ Stonnington Local History Catalogue. Registration number. MB5054.

The new dairy was a square plan, single-storey red-brick structure with a water cooling tower rising above its hipped tiled roof. The dairy also had a loading platform at the front and steps on the north side with a 'servery window' under an awning (presumably for walk-up customers). The stables were located at the rear of the site and contained a manure pit and five timber-framed stalls with a hay loft above. The rebuilt dairy operated as the 'Malvern Dairy' in the 1930s with Thomas Adams as proprietor. A 1933 photograph of the dairy is captioned 'Our Model Dairy' (see figure below).

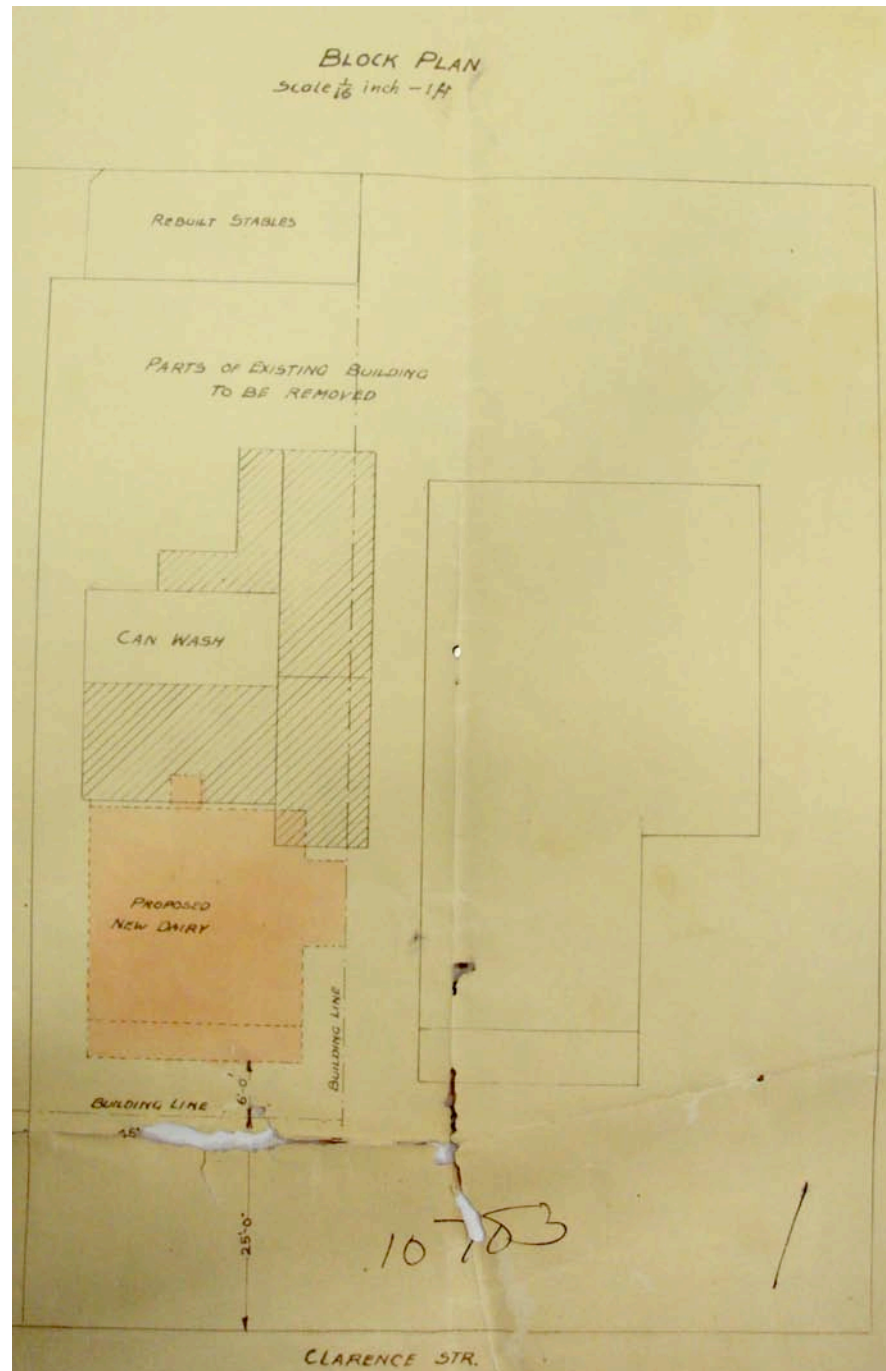


Figure 4 1930 site plan. Source: Stonnington Local History Catalogue.



Figure 5 Front elevation of the dairy. *Stonnington Local History Catalogue.*

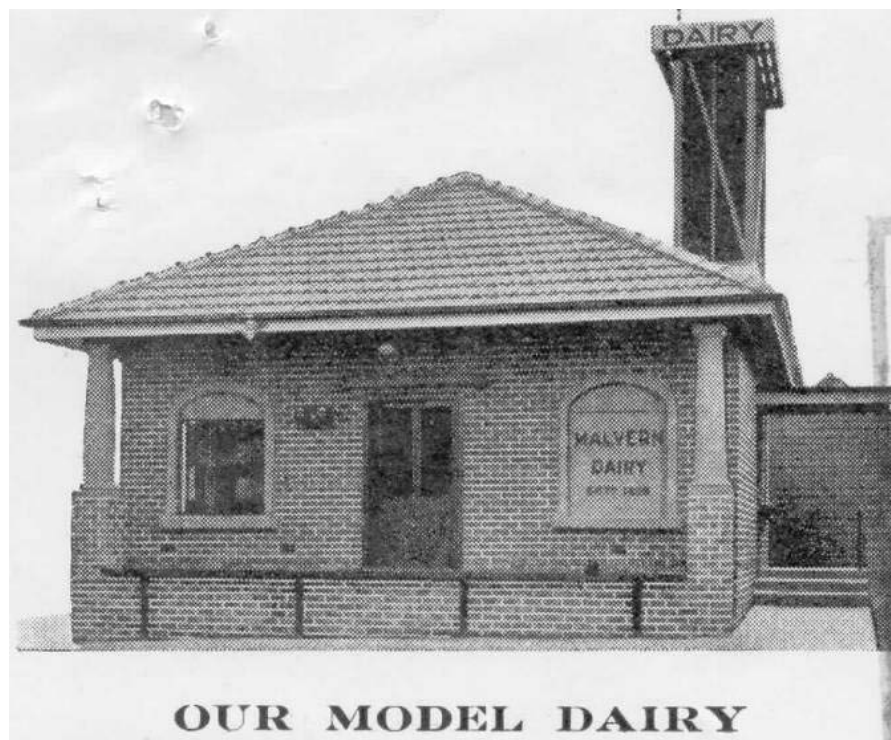


Figure 6 The Malvern Dairy, 37 Clarence Street, 1933. Source: *Stonnington Local History Catalogue.*

A 1946 MMBW Plan of Drainage for 39 Clarence Street includes a notation 'dairy now being converted into dwelling' (see figure 8 below).⁸ The stables are shown at the rear of the site but were no longer in use.

⁸ MMBW Plan of Drainage No. 73402 Yarra Valley Water.

Comparison between the 1946 plan and the original 1930 site plan indicates that the dairy had doubled in size by having a rear addition (labelled 'can wash' and 'can wash trough'). Even though the notation on the 1946 MMBW suggests that the closure of the dairy was at this point imminent, Sands and McDougall directories continue to list the 'Malvern Dairy', and flats, at 39 Clarence Street until 1962. Thereafter the site is simply listed as 'flats'.

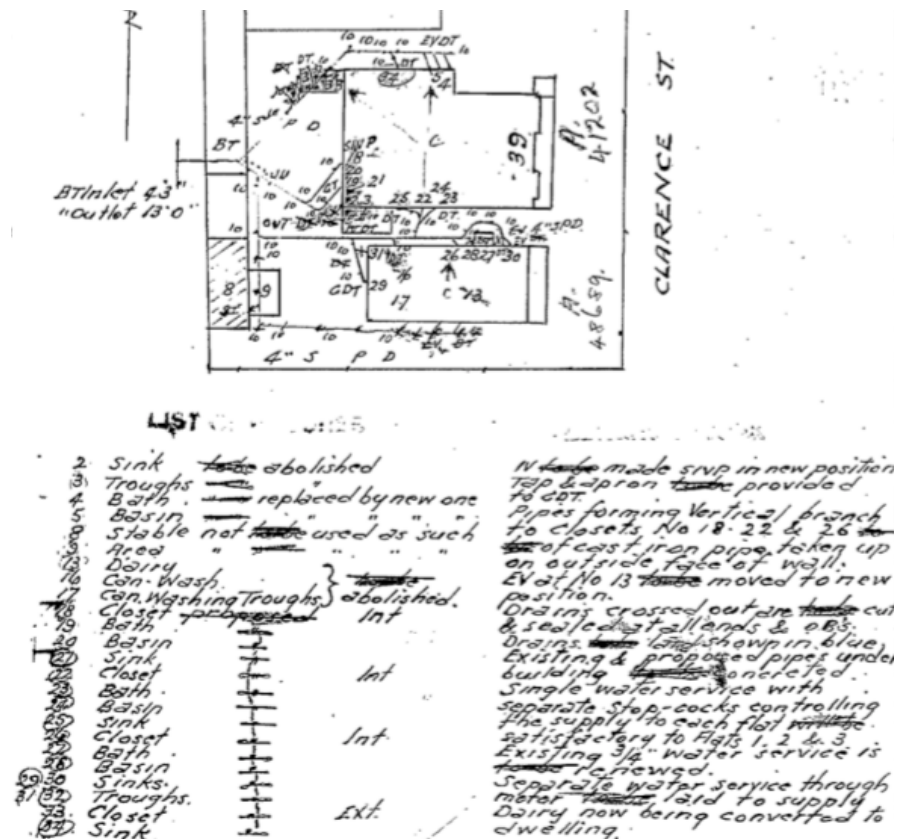


Figure 7 A 1946 MMBW Plan of Drainage for 37-39 Clarence Street. Source: Tarra Valley Water.

5.0 Description

The former Malvern Dairy site at 37-39 Clarence Street, Malvern East is occupied by a late-Victorian villa, a c1930 dairy, and outbuildings. The site also has a reproduction cast iron palisade front fence and three mature Canary Island palms in the front setback. The palm trees can be seen in a 1945 aerial photograph and may have been planted in the interwar period.⁹

The former dairy is a single-storey redbrick building with a hipped tiled roof that projects out over a loading platform at the front of the building. The roof is supported by Tuscan order columns located at either end of the loading platform. The front elevation contains a central, part-glazed timber door, flanked on either side by arched window openings. The north elevation has cantilevered awning over side entry.

⁹ University of Melbourne Library Map Collection:
www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/maps/historical/1945melb/l_sheets/849a3c.jpg



Figure 8 (left) The front elevation of the dairy.

Figure 9 (right) The servery on the north side of the dairy

The rear half of the dairy is an addition that appears to have been constructed prior to 1946 using similar materials and detailing. A plainer weatherboard clad skillion roofed addition is located at the very rear of the building.

Notwithstanding the sympathetic and low-key rear addition, the dairy exterior remains largely intact to its c1930 state. The cooling tower has been demolished and a brick balustrade has been constructed above the front loading platform. It is also apparent from the 1933 photograph above that window opening on the right hand side of the front door was once a blind arch, containing a 'Malvern Dairy' sign.

The villa is a handsome, single-storey Victorian Italianate style building with bi-chrome brick walls and hipped slate roof. The villa's symmetrical front elevation is screened by an elegant cast iron verandah. Although it was rebuilt in the recent past, the verandah is very sympathetic to the early character of the residence. Aside from the verandah, and some modest brick and weatherboard rear additions, the villa exterior appears to remain substantially intact.



Figure 10 (left) The residence at 39 Clarence Street.

Figure 11 (right) The garage at the rear of the dairy. .

A garage is located at the rear of the site, where the c1930 stables once stood. It is a utilitarian, skillion roofed structure with timber and steel garage doors and red-brick walls that may be a remnant of the stables.

6.0 Comparative Analysis

As outlined the theme 6.1.3 Dairying in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History*, neighbourhood dairies were an essential urban service in the early twentieth century and their numbers increased as suburban development spread across Malvern and East Malvern. Legislative changes and the advent of a new Milk Board in 1933 raised standards in dairies, resulting in the de-licensing of about half of Melbourne's dairies. The remaining dairies were forced to make improvements to their facilities. Many were rebuilt or remodelled in the then popular Moderne style. Examples of 'modernised' interwar dairies in Stonnington include: the Nirvana Dairy (now Dairy Bell Ice Cream) on the corner of Waverley and Belgrave roads, Malvern East; Woodmason's Melrose Dairy, 1125-1131 Malvern Road, Malvern; Coughlan's Dairy, 105 Wattletree Road, Armadale; the Moama Dairy, 35B Emo Road; and the Waverley Dairy 300 Waverley Road, East Malvern.

All of the above dairy buildings are variations on the Moderne style. The former Malvern Dairy is distinguished from these examples because it adopts a more unusual domestic character. The dairy is also one of the more intact examples in the Municipality, retaining the dairy and associated residence. The Nirvana Dairy's interwar façade has post war additions and the broader site contains a number of quite undistinguished post-war structures. The Moama Dairy has been converted into a residence and has a reasonably prominent upper floor addition. The Moama Dairy site retains the dairyman's residence (in this case a 1914 timber villa), but it is not nearly as architecturally distinguished as the villa at the former Malvern Dairy. The original dairy production buildings associated with the Woodmason's Melrose Dairy have all been demolished, leaving only an interwar shop row (built for the dairy and bearing their signage on the parapet). The Waverley Dairy has been converted into a bank branch and has a modern shopfront. Coughlan's Dairy, Wattletree Road, remains largely intact externally apart from having a modern café awning and timber deck at the front.



Figure 12 (left) Former Nirvana Dairy, Belgrave Road, Malvern East.



Figure 13 (right) Former Moama Dairy, Emo Road, Malvern East.



Figure 14 (left) Former Woodmason's Melrose Dairy site, Malvern.

Figure 15 (right) Former Dairy, Waverley Road, Malvern East

7.0 Thematic Environmental History

The former Malvern Dairy, 37-39 Clarence Street, Malvern East, illustrates the following theme, as explained in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006):

6.1.3 Dairying

8.0 Statement of Significance

What is Significant?

The former Malvern Dairy at 37-39 Clarence Street, Malvern East, was established c1930 on the site of an earlier 1918 dairy. It consists of a single-storey Victorian Italianate style villa and a c1930 single-storey red-brick dairy, both facing the street. Three mature Canary Island palms (*phoenix canariensis*) stand in the front setback.

How is it Significant?

The former Malvern Dairy is of local historic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it Significant?

Historically, the former Malvern Dairy is significant as a now rare surviving example of the model suburban dairies established in the 1930s when tighter controls were placed on the processing and supply of milk. Small dairies were once common in residential areas of Melbourne but were made obsolete by improved refrigerated transport and the shift towards industrial scale dairy production.

The former Malvern Dairy also provides evidence of the development of essential services associated with a major phase of suburban development of Malvern East in the inter-war period.

The Victorian villa demonstrates how early dairies operated as independent family-run businesses with the dairyman living on site. This tradition was discontinued in the post war period when larger, centralised dairies become the norm.

The former Malvern Dairy is architecturally significant as a good representative example of an interwar suburban dairy with somewhat unusual design characteristics that set it apart from the more common Moderne style interwar dairies. It exhibits some of the principal elements of dairy design including the loading platform at the front and the side servery. The adjacent villa is a fine example of a late-Victorian Italianate style residence demonstrating a high level of integrity. The mature Canary Island palms in the front setback contribute to the early character of the place and provide an attractive setting for the dairy.

9.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the former Malvern Dairy and residence at 37-39 Clarence Street, Malvern, be added to the schedule of the Heritage Overlay under the City of Stonnington Planning Scheme. It is further recommended that the site be exempt from paint controls and internal alteration controls under the heritage overlay. The Canary Island palms at the front of the site should be subject to tree controls.

The extent of the heritage overlay should correspond to all of the land on the existing titles for 37 and 39 Clarence Street. This notwithstanding, it is recognised that parts of the site, including the rear garage and outbuildings do not contribute to the significance of the place.

The City of Stonnington has adopted the former City of Prahran building grading system. The former Malvern Dairy has not previously been assessed or graded under this system. The current assessment finds that the dairy and residence demonstrates significance at an A2 level.

10.0 References

MMBW Detail Plan 1706. State Library of Victoria.
MMBW Plan of Drainage No. 73402 Yarra Valley Water.
Sands and McDougall Directories.
Stonnington Local History Catalogue.

