

## Heritage Citation

### ‘WAINGAWA’

**Address:** 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale

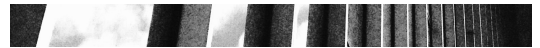
**Prepared by:** GJM Heritage/Purcell

**Date:** June 2017 (updated 31 July 2018)

<b>Place type:</b> Residential	<b>Architect:</b> Ernest H. Willis
<b>Grading:</b> Locally significant	<b>Builder:</b> Not known
<b>Integrity:</b> Very High	<b>Construction Date:</b> 1908
<b>Recommendation:</b> Include in the Heritage Overlay	<b>Extent of Overlay:</b> To property title boundary



Figure 1. 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale (GJM Heritage/Purcell, June 2016)



## Statement of Significance

### *What is significant?*

The Federation house known as Waingawa, 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, a single-storey dwelling built in 1908 for architect Ernest H Willis.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The house's original external form, materials and detailing
- The house's high level of integrity to its original design.

Later alterations and additions, such as additions at the rear, rear outbuildings and attached side carport, are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

Waingawa, 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, is of local architectural, aesthetic and historical significance to the City of Stonnington.

### *Why is it significant?*

Waingawa, 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, is a fine and highly intact example of a Federation house. The house strongly reflects the Federation Queen Anne architectural style popular in the first decade of the twentieth century in Armadale and across Melbourne more broadly. The unusually symmetrical composition, with complex roof forms including central dormer and two engaged turrets, and architectural elements and materials, including tall chimneys, half-timbering with rough cast render, timber verandah detailing, polygonal bays and decorative coloured glass, are typical of the style. The use of quality materials and elaborate detailing imparts a sense of grandeur and demonstrates the status of the owner in wealthy established areas such as Armadale in the early twentieth century (Criterion D).

Waingawa, 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, is a carefully designed and well-resolved example of a Federation house. The complex roof form with central dormer and engaged turrets and tall chimneys, rich timber decoration, extensive use of coloured and leadlight glass, present a picturesque composition of this architectural style (Criterion E).

Waingawa, 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, has a strong association with architect and local councillor, Ernest Willis, as both his home and presumably as an example of his work. Willis designed a number of local landmark buildings, including the Prahran Club, Windsor (HO416), Prahran Mechanics' Institute, Prahran (HO53 and VHR H0400), Prahran Creche, Prahran (HO420) and the early flats, Fawkner Mansions, Prahran (HO448). He was also very involved in community organisations and local politics, including as a Prahran City Councillor (1908-20) and Mayor in 1913-14 and 1918-19 (Criterion H).

## Historical Themes

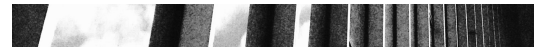
The place illustrates the following themes as outlined in the *Stonnington Environmental History* (2009):

### 8 Building Suburbs

- 8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal
- 8.4 Creating Australia's most designed suburbs
  - 8.4.3 Architects and their houses

## Locality history

The land on which the suburb of Armadale now sits was first occupied by farmers and market gardeners in the 1840s and 50s, but its pleasant rural outlook and relative proximity to the centre of Melbourne meant that it proved desirable and was subsequently subdivided for residential purposes. The locality was named after 'Armadale' on Kooyong Road (1876), the residence of James Munro. Munro was a speculator and



land-boomer, President of the Gardiner Road District Board (1872-73) and later Premier of Victoria (1890-1892). Munro named the house after his town of birth, Armadale in Sutherland Shire, Scotland (Context 2006: 193; Victorian Places). Armadale was previously part of both the former City of Prahran and former City of Malvern, divided by Kooyong Road, before their consolidation in 1994 to form the City of Stonnington.

In 1879, the Oakleigh railway line was opened along the southern extent of the municipality, through Malvern, Armadale, Toorak and Hawksburn to join the existing line at South Yarra. The arrival of the Oakleigh railway line coincided with the beginning of the land boom, which saw substantial urban growth across what is now the City of Stonnington. The population of the former City of Prahran almost doubled in the 1880s, with development spreading east of Kooyong Road, into the western part of the former City of Malvern, while the population of the former City of Malvern saw a dramatic increase, quadrupling to approximately 8,000 by 1891. The arrival of the railway line triggered commercial expansion near Armadale station and the subdivision and residential development of the surrounding area. The character of the development varied. Small timber and brick workers cottages and residences, and some terraces and duplexes, were typically constructed closer to the railway lines. More substantial family dwellings and mansions were typically constructed further away from the station, predominantly of brick, on large suburban blocks of land (Context 2006:65-6; Victorian Places). However, by 1891, the cycle of land speculation that had driven price growth and residential expansion began to collapse, and the 1890s Depression hit hard. 'As the inflow of foreign funds that had previously underpinned expansion dried up, companies and governments stopped building housing, roads and railways and the economy contracted swiftly and savagely' (Dingle 2008).

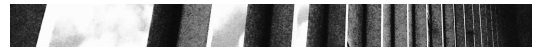
The entry for Armadale in the 1893 *Australian Handbook* (as cited in Victorian Places) declared that 'views from some points are enchanting, and it is one of the favourite resorts of wealthy Melbourne men, and a great number of fine mansions and villa residences in the locality.' At this date there were three churches, a state school, several private schools, a bank and 'many fine business establishments along High Street', the chief thoroughfare. The commercial strips extended from the railway station eastwards along High Street. In 1910, the tramline along High Street was extended to Tooronga Road, joining the High Street and Glenferrie Road commercial areas and enabling easier access to the locality. In 1915, the tramline along Malvern Road opened, and the Dandenong Road-Wattletree Road tramline opened in 1928 (Victorian Places).

Residential development during the early twentieth century often occurred on newly subdivided estates or filled nineteenth century subdivisions that had remained partly or wholly undeveloped during the 1890s depression (Context 2009:5). In the first few decades of the twentieth century, many of the boom-era mansions were converted into shared accommodation, to serve as exclusive guest houses and, more commonly, boarding houses. In the 1930s the locality earned a reputation as a poor area (Context 2006:143). Ultimately, Armadale's proximity to Melbourne and Toorak (considered Melbourne's pre-eminent suburb) meant it was again able to cement its status as one of Melbourne's most prestigious residential addresses and to attract a wealthy class of homeowner.

### Place history

The property on the south-west corner of Denbigh and Avondale roads included the Victorian house 'Eurobin', evident on the 1901 MMBW plan (since demolished). In December 1892 Geoffrey Travers, medical practitioner 'of Denbigh Street, Armadale', purchased the property (LV:V2032/F299) and subdivided it into two, on-selling the house 'Eurobin' in 1907 (LV:V2032/F299). In 1907 Geoffrey Travers was still rated as the owner of no. 41 Denbigh Road (current 29 Denbigh Road), which remained vacant land (RB).

In March 1908, Travers sold lots fronting Denbigh Road (including what is now no. 29) to Isabella Willis, married woman 'of 28 Denbigh Road, Armadale' (LV:V2032/F299). In 1908, Ernest Willis, architect was



rated as the owner and occupant of a 9 room brick house at 41 Denbigh Road, with a Net Annual Value of 100 pounds; a value indicating a substantial house (RB). Willis subdivided the northern portion of the lot (with a 6 metre frontage to Denbigh Road) and on-sold it in March 1908 (LV:V3257/F255). This indicates that the house at the current 29 Denbigh Road was built in 1908 for owners Ernest and Isabella Willis. The house was designed by owner architect Ernest H. Willis (VHD).

The 1909 Property Sewerage Plan (PSP; Figure 2) recorded Isabella Willis of '28 Denbigh Road, Armadale' as the owner of the property; no agent was listed. The footprint of the new house showed the facade comprising the central entrance flanked by two bays and a verandah to the facade that returned on both the north and south elevations. The hipped bay was shown on the north elevation (this remains in 2017). The house extended to the west with a verandah on the rear (west) elevation, with outbuildings and a stable on the south-west corner of the property (since removed for later alterations to the rear of the house) (PSP). The 1909 Sands & McDougall Directory listed Ernest H. Willis (for the first time) on the west side of Denbigh Road at 'Waingawa'. Waingawa is a location north-east of Wellington on the North Island of New Zealand.

An advertisement published in the *Argus* in March 1934 described the house at 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, for sale under instructions from the executors of the late Isabella Willis. The house was described as a substantial brick villa 'in first-class condition' with a garage for two cars. The article described the numerous interior rooms including six bedrooms and three reception rooms (*Argus*, 24 Mar 1934:2). Subsequently, in April 1934, 29 Denbigh Road was sold to Emily Georgian Sides (LV:V3257/F255). The house remained in the Sides family until 1958, after which it was owned by a number of subsequent owners (LV:V5893/F504; V8375/F317).

Council Valuation records indicate that a permit was granted for the front fence in 1989 (Valuers Field Book). The Council property file indicates that in 1996 the rear of the house was altered, comprising the demolition of later additions and interior alterations. The carport was also constructed in 1996. In 2010, the north-south hipped section at the rear of the house was extended at each end. A modern addition off the rear elevation and a pool pavilion was also constructed (SCC PF).

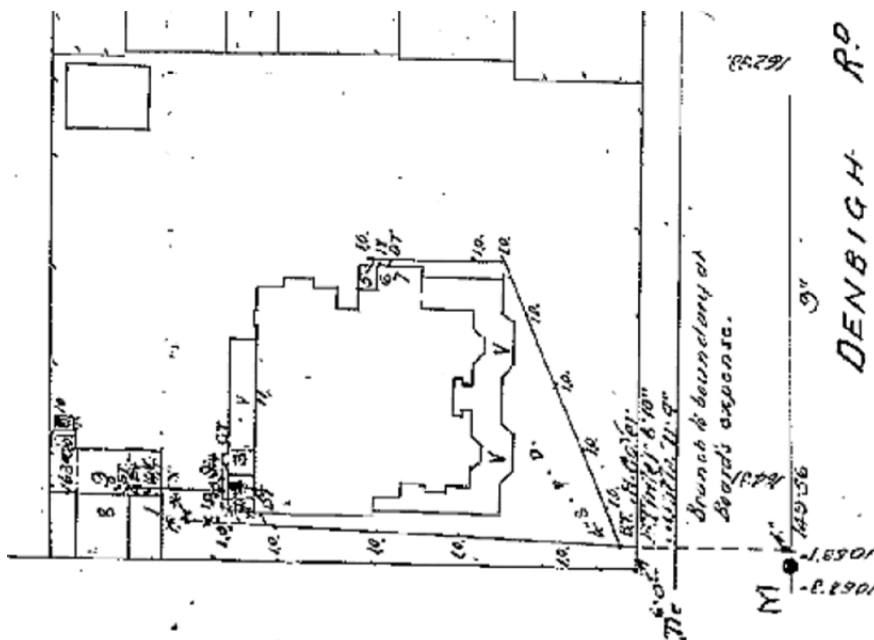
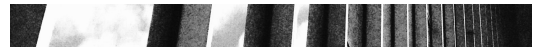


Figure 2. The footprint of the house in 1909, which showed the facade comprising the central entrance flanked by two bays, and a verandah to the facade that returned on both the north and south elevations (PSP).





### Ernest H. Willis, architect

Ernest Horatio Willis was an architect and surveyor who designed a number of landmark buildings in the former City of Prahran in the early twentieth century. Willis was born in South Yarra in 1867 and was a Prahran local, serving his articles in the architectural firm of William Salway, before becoming a registered architect in 1887. Shortly before 1900, Willis formed a partnership with Rupert Nicholson; it is not known how long he partnered with Nicholson, but Willis's name appeared as the sole designer on commissions after 1910 (Context 2010).

Willis is known to have designed Melbourne's earliest purpose-built flats, 'Fawkner Mansions', at 250 Punt Road, Prahran (1910-11) and the Prahran Mechanics Institute at 140 High Street, Prahran (1915). He also designed the former Prahran Tradesmen's Club, 258-262 High Street, Windsor (c1911) and Prahran Creche, 17 Princes Close, Prahran (1913). On a residential scale his work includes his own house 'Waingawa' at 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale and 'war widow' houses in Victory Square, Armadale (details not known) (Context 2010; VHD).

Willis was the son of Samuel Willis, an ex-Councillor who was Mayor of Prahran when it was first declared a City in 1879. Ernest Willis, like his brother Sam Jnr, followed his father into local government, both sons serving as Mayor for different municipalities (*Prahran Telegraph*, 25 Jun 1902:2; City of Prahran Annual Report 1918-19; Cooper 1912:242). Willis was a member of Prahran Council (1908-1920) and Mayor (1913-14 & 1918-19) (VHD). In 1913, social pages in the *Malvern Standard* (20 Sep, 1913:5) reported that the 'Mayoress of Prahran', Mrs Ernest H. Willis, would be at home at 'Waingawa' on Denbigh Road, Armadale. Isabella Willis was often mentioned in the social pages of local newspapers in the 1910s and '20s. Both Willis and his wife were involved in philanthropic activities, particularly during World War II (Wilde, 1993:160). Willis was vice-president of the Alfred Hospital board (1925-41), and served on the Tramways Board, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, and as Secretary of the Prahran branch of the National Party. He was appointed an OBE as a leader of patriotic movements in Victoria in 1920 in recognition for his work organising a local patriotic fund, a Red Cross Society, a recruiting depot and construction of 16 war widows' homes at 'Victory Square', Armadale (VHD).

### Description

The dwelling at 29 Denbigh Road is a substantial attic style dwelling, with a small setback from the street and an established garden. In terms of both form and detail, the dwelling is characteristic of the Federation Queen Anne style and exhibits many high-quality features. Constructed in 1908, the dwelling remains in good condition.

The house has a unique, symmetrical roof plan, with gable projections on three sides and a central attic gable on the front façade flanked by two engaged blind turrets (see Figure 3). Two red brick chimneys with brick strapwork and corbelling, and single terracotta chimney pots remain. The walls are constructed in red brick with remnant black tuckpointing around the main entrance, and the roof is of Marseille tiles with decorative trefoil ridge tiles and both fleur-de-lis and fern finials. Rafter tails are exposed at the eaves, and the main roof continues at a shallow pitch to form the return verandah, which is supported on turned timber posts with ornate Art Nouveau brackets and a simple balustrade timber frieze. The verandah floor is original encaustic tiles, with bluestone edging. The central attic gable is finished in roughcast render (overpainted), with a bank of four casement windows with diamond-pane leadlight glazing. Secondary gables project to the north and south, with roughcast render (overpainted) and vertical timber strapwork to the gable ends. Windows are casements with leaded diaper work and coloured stained glass highlights. The windows on the east elevation feature bluestone sills, with raked brick sills common on the south elevation. The front entrance to the dwelling is recessed behind a substantial round archway flanked by engaged columns with dentilated cushion style capitals, and decorative rendered arch (overpainted). The original front door set is two panelled with stained glass glazing with symmetrical sidelights and fanlight (see Figure 4).

The site is bounded by a modern post and panel timber fence constructed in 1989. One mature oak tree, that appears to be a good specimen, is located in the main frontage. A driveway runs along the southern boundary to a modern carport towards the rear, constructed in 1996. Behind the main dwelling, is a large modern L shaped extension that runs the full width of the dwelling and several modern outbuildings.



Figure 3. Roof detail (GJM Heritage/Purcell, June 2016)



Figure 4. Entrance detail (GJM Heritage/Purcell, June 2016)

### Integrity

The house retains a high degree of integrity to the Federation Queen Anne style, in fabric, form and detail. While the house has undergone some alterations and additions, these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a fine example of a Federation house.

### Comparative Analysis

Waingawa, 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, is of note as a representative and intact example of the Federation Queen Anne style which was commonly applied to the design of houses in Victoria from the late 1880s through to the early twentieth century. It was the dominant style in Victorian domestic architecture during the decades immediately before and after 1900 and was applied to both large and modest dwellings. Originally an English revival of both traditional rural design and elements from a range of periods, this style was seen in the work of English architects such as Norman Shaw. This 'Old English' style became popular in the United States and influences of both English and American Queen Anne can be seen in a distinctly Federation Queen Anne style which developed in Australia.

Predominantly a domestic style, houses were designed in a picturesque manner with asymmetrical forms, dominant and complex roofs with multiple gables, conical towers, dormer windows and tall chimneys. Houses were often single storey and sprawled over large suburban sites. They share a basic set of materials: usually red brick for walls, timber for verandah posts and decoration, half-timbering with roughcast in the gable ends, and terracotta tiles, or less commonly slate, with decorative terracotta ridge capping and finials for the roof. Other typical characteristics include a variety of bay windows, multi-paned windows with decorative coloured glass sashes and diagonally projecting corners with surrounding verandahs, particularly on corner sites.

A number of leading Melbourne architects designed houses in the Queen Anne style particularly in the 1890s and 1900s and it was commonly adopted in the City of Stonnington in developing suburbs, such as Malvern and Glen Iris, and in wealthy, established areas, such as Armadale and Toorak. Architects associated with this style include Beverley Ussher, Henry Kemp and Christopher Cowper.

Within the City of Stonnington a small number of Federation Queen Anne style houses are included in the Heritage Overlay on an individual basis. These include:



- Darnlee, 33 Lansell Road, Toorak (HO69 & VHR H1024) c1899
- Edzell, 76 St Georges Road, Toorak (HO101 & VHR H0691) 1892
- Redcourt, 506 Orrong Road, Armadale (HO166) 1887
- Chesterfield, 6 Mayfield Avenue, Malvern (HO275) 1891

Two of these houses have identified significance at the state level. These are Darnlee, 33 Lansell Road, Toorak and Edzell, 76 St Georges Road, Toorak and will not be considered further here. The other dwellings are both large and early examples of the Federation Queen Anne style. They are both recognised as fine and early examples of the style in the City of Stonnington and display typical characteristics of the Federation Queen Anne style. They are noted as follows:

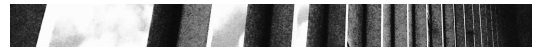
- Redcourt, 506 Orrong Road, Armadale (Reed, Henderson & Smart, 1887) is a fine and very early example of the Federation Queen Anne style in Melbourne. It is a large, two-storey, red brick house, set on a large allotment, with tiled roof, jettied gables supported on ornate, timber brackets, half-timbered gable ends, segmental arched windows, large oriel bay window and tall buttressed chimneys.
- Chesterfield, 6 Mayfield Avenue, Malvern (Phillip E Treeby, 1891) is an accomplished and early example of the Federation Queen Anne style in Melbourne. It is a large, two-storey, red brick house with steeply pitched tiled roofs, prominent half-timbered gables, multiple tall chimneys with rendered strapwork, jettied gables supported on ornamental timber brackets, bay windows and tall chimneys.

In addition, Stonnington Planning Scheme Amendment C225 recently included the following four Federation Queen Anne houses in the Heritage Overlay in the Stonnington Planning Scheme on an individual basis:

- Coomaroo, 63 Albany Road, Toorak
- Maroondah, 177 Kooyong Road, Toorak
- Quantock, 179 Kooyong Road, Toorak
- Helenslea, 181 Kooyong Road, Toorak

These are recognised as fine representative examples of the Federation Queen Anne style in the City of Stonnington. They display the principal characteristics of the style and are noted as follows:

- Coomaroo, 63 Albany Road, Toorak (architect unknown, 1898/99) is a well-resolved and carefully designed composition which displays the principal characteristics of the Federation style. It is a single storey, red brick house with tiled roof, prominent and distinctive crenellated turret with crowning cast iron balustrade and multiple half-timbered gable ends.
- Maroondah, 177 Kooyong Road, Toorak (architect unknown, 1898/99) is a well-resolved and carefully designed composition which displays the principal characteristics of the Federation style. It is a single storey, red brick house (front overpainted) with slate roof, asymmetrical facade with prominent half-timbered and stuccoed gabled bay window and verandah with smaller gable.
- Quantock, 179 Kooyong Road, Toorak (architect unknown, 1898/99) appears to be a well-resolved and carefully designed composition which displays the principal characteristics of the Federation style. It is a single storey red brick house with tiled roof, large moulded and strapped chimney, central transverse ridge and projecting front gables.
- Helenslea, 181 Kooyong Road, Toorak (architect unknown, 1898/99) appears to be a well-resolved and carefully designed composition which displays a fusion of Victorian and Federation style characteristics. It is a single storey, bichromatic brick house with slate roof, terracotta roof cresting, large corbelled and strapped chimneys, asymmetrical front facade with projecting gable



end with canted bay window, half-timbering, stucco finish and decorative timber brackets, and a verandah roof integral with the main roof.

Waingawa, 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, was built in 1908 when the Federation Queen Anne style was flourishing in established suburbs such as Armadale, and across Melbourne. Like the examples included in the Heritage Overlay, Waingawa displays a large range of characteristics which have strong associations with this style. The house remains highly intact to demonstrate these strong associations.

Waingawa demonstrates the following Federation Queen Anne characteristics:

- Picturesque form with projecting gables, hips and two polygonal turrets
- Verandah roof which projects around the polygonal turrets and the window bays below
- Lower pitched verandah roof integral with the main roof
- Red brick walls and corbelled and strapped chimneys
- Terracotta tiled roof with terracotta ridge capping and finials
- Roughcast render to gable ends and bays and vertical timbering to gable ends
- Turned timber verandah posts and decorative timber fretwork detailing
- Polygonal multi-paned window bays and front door and surrounds containing elaborate leadlight glass
- Upper casement windows with leaded diamond patterned panes.

There are also large numbers of Federation Queen Anne style houses that are included in the Heritage Overlay in the Stonnington Planning Scheme as significant and contributory places within Heritage Precincts. These are included in precincts such as HO130 Armadale Precinct, HO133 Gascoigne Estate, HO156 Claremont Avenue Precinct and HO375 Coonil Estate Precinct Malvern.

#### *Work of Architect Ernest Willis*

Several buildings designed by Melbourne architect Ernest Willis have been recognised as significant at a local level in the City of Stonnington. These are:

- Fawcner Mansions, 250 Punt Road, Prahran (1910, HO448)
- Prahran Club (former Prahran Trademen's Club), 258-262 High Street, Windsor (c1911, HO416)
- Former Prahran, South Yarra and Toorak Crèche, 17 Princes Close, Prahran (1913, HO420)
- Prahran Mechanics Institute, High Street, Prahran (1915, HO53 and VHR H0400).

The Willis' family house, Waingawa, 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, is the only house design by Willis that has been identified to date in the City of Stonnington.

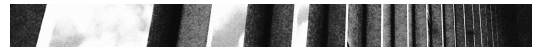
#### **Assessment Against Criteria**

Following is an assessment of the place against the recognised heritage criteria set out in *Planning Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay* (July 2015).

**Criterion D:** *Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).*

Waingawa, 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, is a fine and highly intact example of a Federation house. The house strongly reflects the Federation Queen Anne architectural style popular in the first decade of the twentieth century in Armadale and across Melbourne more broadly. The unusually symmetrical composition, with complex roof forms including central dormer and two polygonal turrets, and architectural elements and materials, including tall chimneys, half-timbering with roughcast render, timber verandah detailing, polygonal bays and decorative coloured glass, are typical of the style. The use of quality materials and elaborate detailing imparts a sense of grandeur and demonstrates the status of the owner in wealthy established areas such as Armadale in the early twentieth century.



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

Waingawa, 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, is a carefully designed and well-resolved example of a Federation house. The complex roof form with dormer and turrets, tall chimneys, rich timber decoration and the use of coloured and leadlight glass, present a picturesque composition of this architectural style.

**Criterion H: Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance)**

Waingawa, 29 Denbigh Road, Armadale, has a strong association with architect and local councillor, Ernest Willis, as both his home and presumably as an example of his work. Willis designed a number of local landmark buildings, including the Prahran Club, Windsor (HO416), Prahran Mechanics' Institute, Prahran (HO53 and VHR H0400), Prahran Creche, Prahran (HO420) and the early flats, Fawkner Mansions, Prahran (HO448). He was also very involved in community organisations and local politics, including as a Prahran City Councillor (1908-20) and Mayor in 1913-14 and 1918-19.

**Grading and Recommendations**

It is recommended that the place be included in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme as a locally significant heritage place.

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) in the Stonnington Planning Scheme:

<b>External Paint Controls?</b>	No
<b>Internal Alteration Controls?</b>	No
<b>Tree Controls?</b>	No
<b>Outbuildings or Fences not exempt under Clause 43.01-3?</b>	No
<b>Prohibited Uses Permitted?</b>	No
<b>Incorporated Plan?</b>	No
<b>Aboriginal Heritage Place?</b>	No

**Extent of the recommended Heritage Overlay**

To the property title boundary, as indicated by the purple polygon on the aerial below.



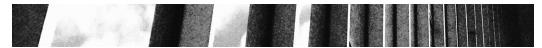


Figure 5. 2016 aerial of subject site (Source: Stonnington City Council).

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