

**Wiltondale, 25 Heyington Place, Toorak  
Heritage Citation Report**



Figure 1 25 Heyington Place, Toorak.

**History and Historical Context**

Thematic Context

The following is drawn from the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006).

*The End of an Era – Mansion Estates Subdivision in the Early Twentieth Century*

Toorak has been described as ‘*the only suburb to acquire and keep a name which was synonymous in the public mind with wealth, extravagance and display*’.<sup>1</sup> The suburb’s climb to fashionable pre-eminence was due to its pleasing topographic features and the presence of the Governor’s residence from 1854 (Toorak House, after which the suburb is named). Toorak and the higher parts of South Yarra were settled by pastoralists, army officers, high-ranking professionals, and ‘self made’ merchants and traders. Their wealth was manifested in the construction of a suitably impressive mansion, usually set within expansive grounds. As Victoria’s land boom progressed into the late 1880s, the mansions became more elaborate, one of the best surviving examples being *Illawarra* (1 Illawarra Crescent), built by land-boomer Charles Henry James in 1891.

After the collapse of the land boom, many mansions were put to other uses, subdivided or demolished. The subdivision of the old estates of Toorak began to increase after World War I

<sup>1</sup> Paul de Serville, *Pounds and Pedigrees: The Upper Class in Victoria 1850-1880*, p.147.

when the cost of maintaining these large properties became prohibitive. This process of subdivision created a unique pattern of development which can still be understood and interpreted today. Although new subdivisions imposed new road patterns within the original grids, in many cases new estates and streets bore the name of the old properties, while the original houses were sometimes retained within a reduced garden. Toorak nonetheless retained its appeal as a wealthy enclave.

### *Creating Australia's most designed suburb*

Toorak is notable for the strong culture of patronage between architects and their wealthy clients, which existed from the earliest times of settlement. This has resulted in a much higher than average ratio of architect designed houses. In Albany Road alone, 47 of the 61 houses built since 1872 have been attributed to architects. The consequence of this is one of the strongest concentrations of high quality residential architecture in Australia, which provides an important record of all major architectural styles and movements since the earliest days of settlement.

Architects were particularly busy in Toorak in the boom years of the 1880s when newly prosperous merchants, businessmen and land speculators built mansions and grand villas that would stand as testament to their wealth, status and fashionable tastes. A great many examples of nineteenth century domestic architecture in the Municipality were lost through demolition, however many of these demolitions created opportunities for twentieth century architects.

After the turn of the century, architects continued to have a major influence on the wealthy suburbs in present day Stonnington. Walter Butler, Robert Hamilton, Marcus Martin and Rodney Alsop were among the notable architects whose work is well represented in Toorak. These architects built predominately in the fashionable architecture styles of the 1920s and 1930s, particularly the Georgian revival and Old English modes.

### Place History

In 1856 merchant Henry William Daugleish purchased five and a half acres of land on Heyington Road.<sup>2</sup> Two years later Daugleish built an impressive brick villa of fifteen rooms, which he named Beaulieu.<sup>3</sup> Daugleish got into financial difficulties and in 1863 his property was sold to Mars Buckley, co-founder of the drapery firm Buckley and Nunn. Extensive alterations were made to Beaulieu in 1871, and by 1884 it had been transformed into an opulent Italianate style mansion of thirty rooms.<sup>4</sup> Buckley resided at Beaulieu until his death in 1905. In 1911 the property was sold to solicitor Lauchlan Kenneth Scobie Mackinnon, who subsequently renamed the house Kilbride after his birthplace on the Isle of Skye.<sup>5</sup> Mackinnon lived at Kilbride until 1922 when it was bought by St Catherine's Girls School. City of Prahran rate books indicate that land to the north of the mansion was subdivided c1923 creating four new houses sites on Heyington Place (including 25 Heyington Place).<sup>6</sup>

A ten room brick house is first recorded at 25 Heyington Place in the rate books for the period 1929-30. Merchant Roy Duckett is listed as owner and occupant of the house.<sup>7</sup> Prior to this, rate books show 25 Heyington Place as vacant land. This suggests a 1929 construction date for the house presently at 25 Heyington Place.

<sup>2</sup> DE & IV Hansen, *St Catherine's A Centenary Celebration* 1896-1996, p.43.

<sup>3</sup> Miles Lewis Melbourne Mansions Database/ No.806.

<sup>4</sup> DE & IV Hansen, *St Catherine's A Centenary Celebration* 1896-1996, p.44.

<sup>5</sup> Betty Malone, *Discovering Prahran: Area 7*, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> City of Prahran Rate Books 1922-23 (p.65) 1923-24 (p. 69).

<sup>7</sup> City of Prahran Rate Books 1929-1930. No. 1654, p.83.

The earliest MMBW plan of drainage for the site, dated 9 August 1928, names architect Robert Bell Hamilton as the 'agent' (the agent often being the house's architect).<sup>8</sup>

The house was purchased by St Catherine's School in 1999 and converted into a visual arts centre c2012.<sup>9</sup>

### Robert Bell Hamilton

The architect of 25 Heyington Place was Robert Bell Hamilton. Born in 1892 and educated at Scotch College, Hamilton served in the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the AIF during WWI. After the armistice he studied in London to become an associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects. After his graduation, Hamilton remained in London where he designed a housing scheme for the Slough City Council before securing a position as the assistant to the government architect in Bombay, India in 1920. In Melbourne in the same year, Rodney Alsop's continued ill health brought an end to his successful architectural partnership with F L Klingender. Two years later, Klingender formed a new partnership with the recently-returned Hamilton, who became the designing partner.

Initially, Hamilton positioned himself within the Arts and Crafts vernacular vocabulary that had characterised Alsop's work throughout the previous decade, but in the subsequent years, Hamilton gradually eradicated the American influence from his work and by the late 1920s had become the foremost exponent of Tudor Revival styling in Melbourne. Hamilton's design approach drew upon Arts and Crafts principles, in particular the idea that architectural expression should extend beyond the built fabric and into individual components such as leadlight, fittings and furniture. The partnership with F L Klingender lasted until 1925 when Hamilton established his own practice.

Hamilton was active in Melbourne until WWII and worked alone and in partnership with other architects such as Marcus Norris to produce a large number of residences in a variety of styles throughout the inner eastern suburbs of Melbourne. These include a substantial villa in the restrained Georgian mode at 7 Landale Road, Toorak, completed in the early 1930s, and houses built at 8 and 12 Macquarie Road in 1929 and 1930 respectively.

Although Hamilton designed a number of large and impeccably detailed houses in the Tudor Revival mode, he is best remembered for his Tudor Revival flats, including Burnham at 14 Grange Road, Toorak (1933), Moore Abbey, 50 Marne Street, South Yarra (1934), Denby Dale, 422-426 Glenferrie Road, Kooyong (1938), and for a number of shops throughout Prahran and Malvern in the same mode. Hamilton's group of Tudor style shops in Toorak Village (at 476-478 and 541 Toorak Road) are particularly well known, and are commonly understood to set the character of this small shopping strip.

Robert Hamilton was elected Member of the Legislative Assembly for Toorak in November 1945. He was both a parliamentarian and a Councillor for Mornington Shire when he died on 15 May 1948.

### **Description**

Wiltondale at 25 Heyington Place is a substantial interwar English Domestic Revival style house. It has a symmetrical façade with a Tudor arched arch porte cochere at the centre, flanked on either side by half-timbered window bays with herringbone pattern clinker brick infill. External walls are otherwise finished in a smooth render. The main transverse gabled roof has terracotta shingle cladding, an 'eye lid' vent at the centre and tall clinker brick chimneys at either end. Twin gable ends above the front window bays are plainly adorned

<sup>8</sup> MMBW Plan of Drainage No.170407. South East Water.

<sup>9</sup> City of Stonnington Building File BL1055/2012/0113/0

apart from narrow slots. The eaves line of the main roof continues unbroken across the front of the gables. Window frames are typically double hung sashes with diamond pattern leadlight glazing characteristic of the English Domestic Revival mode.

Wiltondale presents a largely intact façade to Heyington Place apart from glazing-in of the first floor balcony. Demolition works have mainly been limited to the interior and a secondary rear wing. The original domestic character of the place remains legible despite the house having been converted into a school building with modern additions to the rear. The additions are respectfully scaled and sited behind the main envelope of the house.

## **Comparative Analysis**

### *English Domestic Revival Styles*

Sometimes referred to as Tudor, interwar Old English was an offshoot of the Arts and Crafts medievalism of the late nineteenth century, and shared that movement's values in terms of dark, natural colourings, a predominance of brickwork, the use of half timbering and a love of wrought iron and leadlight windows. Old English architecture was typified by the use of red or clinker brick, brick nogging and/or half timbering in gables or upper storeys, boldly modelled brick chimneys and terracotta tile roofs.

Steeply pitched roofs with gables rather than hips were a typical characteristic of the larger, two storey examples, though small suburban houses often had a combination of hips and gables. Walls were usually sheer rather than textured and ended flush with the gable of the roof. Sometimes manganese bricks or tiles or tapestry bricks were used to highlight openings and to decorate walls. Picturesque asymmetry was attained through double or triple fronts to the facade, arched porch entries, large, prominent chimneys and, in larger examples, oriel windows and towers.

Porches were generally small, and the traditional Australian verandah was not included except in some hybrid examples. Windows were of the sash or casement types, and often featured twelve panes or diamond pattern leadlight. Muted colours were appropriate to this style. Cream, off-white, buff, stone, terracotta and dark brown were most popular. Dark stained timber and red brick were the dominant materials, and cast iron painted black or a dark chocolate brown was also common.

A number of new economies in materials facilitated the rise of the English Domestic revival. The increasingly availability of seasoned hardwoods made possible the use of brick nogging and half-timbering, even in the most modest house. Added to this was the introduction of terracotta shingle tiles, manufactured by the Eureka tile company in their Ballarat kilns.

By the late 1920s, the inclusion of imitation half timbering in the black and white tradition declined although buildings continued to achieve medieval associations through picturesque massing of gabled and hipped roofs and through the application of elements such as leadlight windows. Architects also looked to the vernacular of Normandy for inspiration.

The use of an external expression drawing heavily from medieval precedents became a means of expressing the solidity and longevity of British traditions. Old English or Tudor styled houses were associated with a profound Empire consciousness. Larger houses of the type exploited the associations of the manor to convey wealth and social status. A large Tudor house, no matter how new, somehow conveyed a sense that wealth, even recently achieved, was permanent. So common was the use of this idiom within the nouveau riche enclaves of Toorak and South Yarra that the essentially British term 'Stockbroker Tudor' gained popular usage.

Design in a true Old English mode runs right through the 1920s but it gained much greater momentum from the early 1930s as the bungalow and Spanish Mission began to wane in popularity. From this time it was taken up by a far greater proportion of the architectural profession, and began to appear as a builder's expression. Some of the more progressive designers in this mode, such as Edward Billson and Osborn McCutcheon, incorporated modern planning with careful zoning of spaces according to function. Few houses designed by either architects or builders took the opportunity to break away from revivalism in Old English design other than through the process of progressive simplification, the hallmark of late 1930s stylism. As the decade drew to a close the sentimentality and strong British associations of the academically detailed Old English style were replaced by an expression which drew ever closer to the post-war multi-fronted multi-hipped and unadorned Australian suburban vernacular.

A substantial number of residences drawing inspiration from the English Domestic revival were built in the well-heeled suburbs of Stonnington during the interwar period. Houses in this style with individual heritage overlay controls currently include: 3 Hopetoun Road, Toorak (HO327), 429 Glenferrie Road, Malvern (HO313), 3 Illawara Crescent, Toorak (HO62), 8 Monaro Road, Kooyong (HO277) and 4 Struan Street, Toorak (HO168). Apart from the house at 3 Hopetoun Road, these examples display the English Domestic Revival style's strong tendencies towards picturesque irregularity. Wiltondale's rigorously symmetrical façade is unusual for a house in this idiom. The example at 3 Hopetoun Road has a similar symmetrical façade with a central Tudor arched porte cochere and gabled window bays to either side with herringbone brick infill. It otherwise has a somewhat more heavy handed character, and is not as finely detailed or well proportioned as Wiltondale. The disparities in quality between Wiltondale and other more typical English Domestic Revival style residences attests to architect Robert Bell Hamilton's talent for design in this idiom.

### **Thematic Context**

Wiltondale, 25 Heyington Place, Toorak illustrates the following themes, as identified in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006):

- 8.1.3 - The end of an era – mansion estate subdivisions in the twentieth century
- 8.4.1 - Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion

### **Assessment Against Criteria**

Assessment of the place was undertaken in accordance with the HERCON criteria and the processes outlined in the Australian ICOMOS (Burra) Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Significance.

### **Statement of Significance**

Note that the relevant HERCON criteria and themes from the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (TEH) are shown in brackets.

#### *What is Significant?*

Wiltondale, 25 Heyington Place, Toorak was built c1929 to designs by architect Robert Bell Hamilton. The property originally formed part of the Beaulieu (later Kilbride) mansion estate, and in recent decades was incorporated into St Catherine's School.

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

- The original external form, materials and detailing of the building.
- The generally high level of external intactness.

- The unpainted state of the face brick and terracotta elements.
- The undeveloped front and side setbacks.
- The rendered masonry front fence.

Modern fabric, including the rear additions and metal fences, is not significant.

*How is it significant?*

Wiltondale, 25 Heyington Place, Toorak is of architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

*Why is it significant?*

Wiltondale is architecturally significant as a distinctive and largely intact English Domestic Revival style house designed by important interwar architect Robert Bell Hamilton (Criterion D). The symmetrically composed façade imparts a sense of formality that is unusual for the English Domestic Revival mode (Criterion E).

Wiltondale is of some historical interest as evidence of a major phase of development that took place in the 1920s and 1930s when subdivisions of Toorak's grand mansion estates were developed as prestigious residential enclaves (TEH 8.1.3 The end of an era – mansion estate subdivisions in the twentieth century, Criterion A).

Wiltondale also illustrates the role of houses generally, and architect designed English Domestic Revival style houses in particular, as symbols of wealth, status and taste for Melbourne's upper classes of the interwar period (TEH 8.4.1 - Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion).

## Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme to the extent of the whole property as defined by the title boundaries as shown in figure 2 below. External paint controls, internal alteration controls and tree controls are not recommended. It is further recommended that the building remain A2 graded.

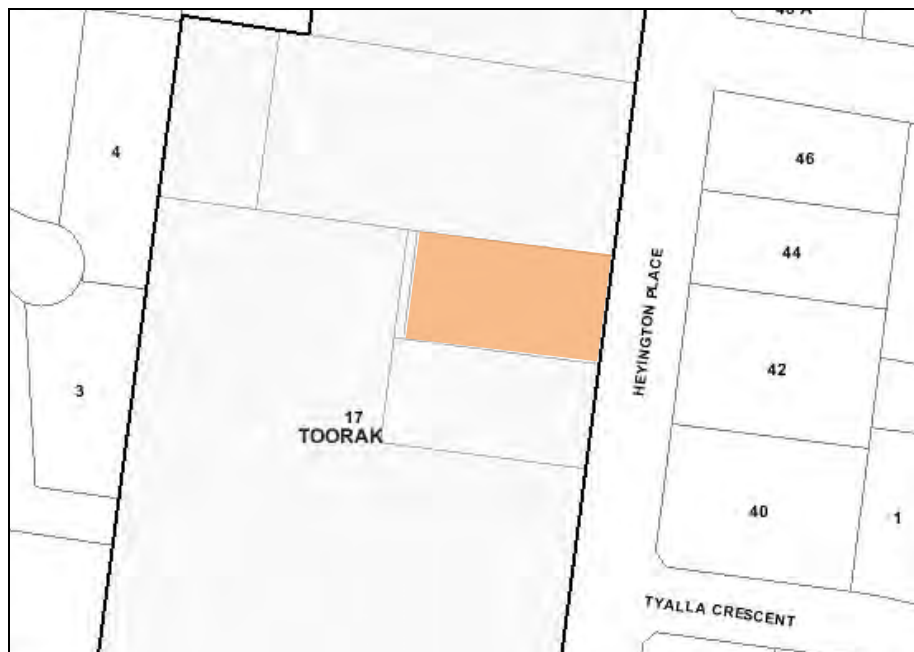


Figure 2 Recommended extent of heritage overlay at 25 Heyington Place, Toorak.