

46 Heyington Place, Toorak Heritage Citation Report



Figure 2 46 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'*.¹ 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 when the cost of maintaining these large properties became prohibitive. This process of

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

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 mansions and grand villas were built for the newly prosperous merchants, businessmen and land speculators. 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 within 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

By the end of the nineteenth century Heyington Place was well established as a prestigious residential enclave of mansions on large estates. A 1905 MMBW plan shows three mansions on the east side of the Heyington Place – Corry, Dalmeny and Tyalla – each with rear boundaries to Kooyong Road.² Tyalla was built in 1881 for James Balfour (1830-1913) Scottish born merchant, churchman and politician. Balfour narrowly avoided bankruptcy after the economic collapse of the early 1890s and he had to leave Tyalla around 1897. The mansion was leased to Joseph Pounds until 1900 and then to merchant William Gibson, co-founder of the famed Foy and Gibson shopping emporia. City of Prahran rate books show Balfour retaining ownership of Tyalla until 1906 when it was acquired by Gibson.³

After William Gibson's death in 1918 Tyalla was offered for sale. The 1922 auction notices promoted the site as a 'magnificent opportunity' for subdivision.⁴ The subdivision of Tyalla occurred the following year, creating twenty-five residential sites fronting Heyington Place, Tyalla Crescent, Kooyong Road and Balbour Street. The new house sites were offered for sale on 17 March 1923 along with the mansion.⁵ Advertisements described house sites in the estate as '*the choicest that Melbourne can offer ... situated in the heart of the aristocratic and most exclusive quarter of Toorak.*'⁶

²MMBW Detail Plan Nos. 930 & 931. State Library of Victoria.

³City of Prahran Rate Book 1905-1906, No. 921, p.93.

⁴*Argus*, 18 November 1922, p.4.

⁵*Argus*, 24 February 1923, p.2.

⁶*Argus*, 14 March 1923, p.2.

A house was built in Tyalla estate on the corner of Heyington Place and Balfour Street c1933-1934 for John Newman-Morris.⁷ The house was designed by architect Stuart Calder⁸ and named 'St Briavels'.⁹ It is first listed as 28 Heyington Place in the 1934 Sands and McDougall directory. In the mid 1950s, the house had been renumbered as 46 Heyington Place.¹⁰

Sir John Newman-Morris (1879-1957) was a prominent medical practitioner and humanitarian. He was heavily involved as a committee member and office bearer for many professional, charitable, community and sporting organisations. In recognition of his outstanding community service, Newman-Morris was appointed CMG in 1938 and knighted in 1948.¹¹ His greatest contribution was to the Red Cross, for which he played role in establishing blood transfusion services. Sir Newman-Morris died at 46 Heyington Place in January 1957.¹²

Stuart Calder

The following is drawn from The Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture.

Stuart Calder (1893-1991) was born in Melbourne and educated at Scotch College and the University of Melbourne. His father William Calder (after whom the Calder Freeway is named) was the inaugural chairman of the Country Roads Board. Stuart Calder was articled to Walter Butler before overseas service in the army in 1915. On his return to Melbourne, Calder worked at Stephenson & Meldrum after a brief period of farming. Calder established his own practice in 1925 and was elected as an Associate of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in May of the same year. Calder's early works included fire stations, cafés and service stations. One of his most acclaimed projects was a combined warehouse, office and showroom at 546-566 Collins Street, built 1934-1936 for the hardware empire of Sir William McPherson. This building is considered to be one of the earliest and most distinguished examples of the streamlined Moderne style. Calder's grandstand at Glenferrie Oval, Hawthorn (1993) is another highly regarded streamlined Moderne design. His firm concentrated mainly on commercial, institutional and municipal projects rather than domestic commissions. Calder played a key role in the establishment of the National Trust and was a founding councillor. He also served as vice-president of the RVIA.

Description

The house at 46 Heyington Place, Toorak is a double-storey interwar English Domestic revival style house with picturesque asymmetrical massing. The gabled roof is clad in terracotta shingles and punctuated by strong, simply detailed chimneys with distinctive tapered caps. Ornamental detailing is essentially limited to the delicate renderwork above the front entry porch. The Balfour Street elevation is dominated by a tall gable end with an oriel window marking the location of an internal staircase. The house's largely unadorned smooth rendered wall surfaces and strong gabled forms are reminiscent of the work of leading English Arts and Crafts architects such as Charles Voysey.

The house appears to be largely intact externally apart from rear additions incorporating a conservatory and garage facing Balfour Street, and indoor pool at the rear. Despite their substantial scale, the additions do not detract from the interwar character of the house as experienced from Heyington Place and Balfour Street.

⁷MMBW Plan of Drainage No. 191536. South East Water.

⁸The MMBW Plan of Drainage names S P Calder as the 'agent'.

⁹*Australasian*, 29 September 1934, p.12.

¹⁰Sands and McDougall Directories, 1950, 1956.

¹¹M. L. Verso, 'Newman-Morris, Sir John (1879-1957)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/newman-morris-sir-john-7832/text13599>

¹²*Canberra Times*, 4 January 1957, p. 1.

Comparative Analysis

English Domestic Revival Styles

Commonly referred to as Tudor or Old English, the English Domestic revival 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.

Architect Robert Hamilton was recognised as the foremost practitioner in this style, designing large and impeccably detailed houses and luxury flats. Other architects strongly associated with Old English/Tudor Revival include Philip Hudson, Eric Beedham and Arthur Plaisted.

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 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 English Domestic revival sources were built in the well-heeled suburbs of Stonnington during the interwar period. Examples in this mode with individual heritage controls currently include 3 Hopetoun Road, Toorak (HO327), 429 Glenferrie Road, Malvern (HO313), 3 Illawara Crescent, Toorak (HO62), 8 Monaro Road, Kooyong (HO277). The house at 46 Heyington Place is distinguished from these examples in that it is able to evoke a romantic Old English atmosphere without relying on the blatantly Medieval stylism of the half-timbered mode. The house displays Arts and Crafts tendencies in its reliance on strongly modeled roof forms and picturesque massing for architectural effect.

Thematic Context

The house at 46 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?

The large double-storey English Domestic Revival style house at 46 Heyington Place, Toorak was constructed in 1933-1934 to designs by architect Stuart Calder. It was built on land subdivided from the grounds of the nineteenth century mansion Tyalla.

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

- The original external form, materials and detailing.
- The largely intact state of the exterior.
- The domestic garden setting (but not the fabric of the garden itself).
- The legibility of the original form in views from the public realm.

Modern fabric, including the rear additions and front fence, is not significant.

How is it significant?

The house at 46 Heyington Place, Toorak is of local architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The house is architecturally significant as a fine and largely intact English Domestic Revival style residence with bold gabled roof forms evoking Arts and Crafts architecture (Criterion D). It is not typical of architect Stuart Calder's oeuvre but nonetheless demonstrates a skilful handling of the English Domestic Revival mode.

The house is of some historical significance as evidence of a major phase of development that took place in the 1920s and 1930s when many of Toorak's grand nineteenth century mansion estates were subdivided to create prestigious residential enclaves (TEH 8.1.3 The end of an era – mansion estate subdivisions in the twentieth century, Criterion A). It also illustrates the role of houses generally, and 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. The place should retain its current A2 grading.

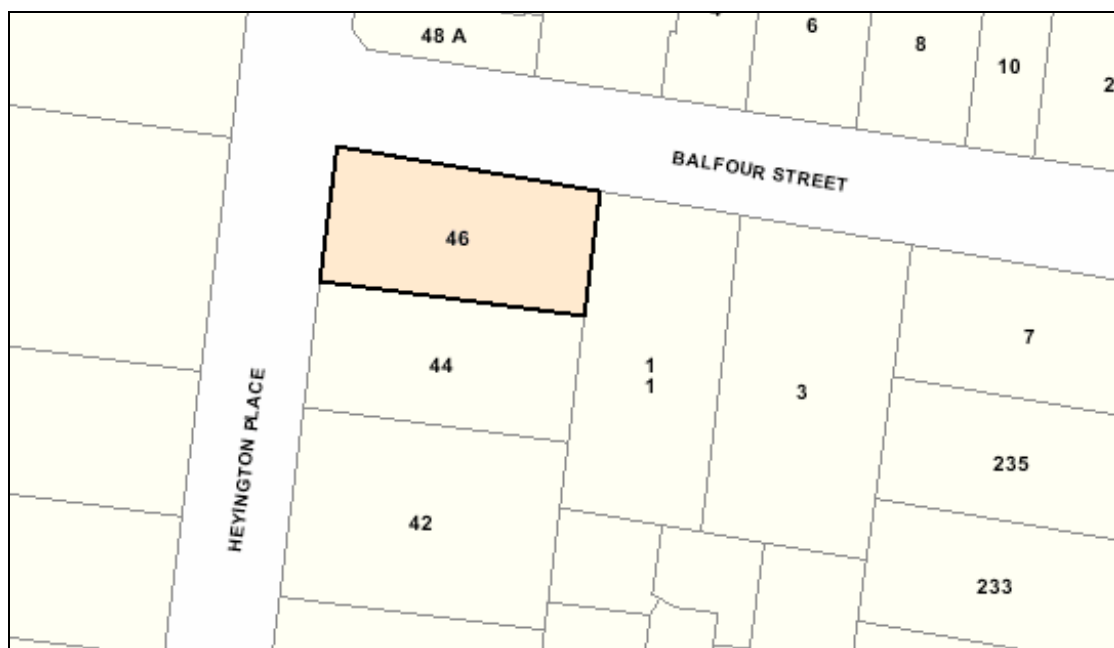


Figure 2 Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 46 Heyington Place, Toorak.