

Figure 4.2 James Kearney 1855, *Plan of Melbourne and its Suburbs* (southern end). (Source: State Library Victoria)

4.2 A.S. Selwyn, Geological Survey of Melbourne, 1860



Figure 4.3 A.S. Selwyn, Geological map of the Melbourne area, c1860. (Source: State Library Victoria)

4.3 Henry Cox, survey of Melbourne, 1865



Figure 4.4 H.L. Cox map of Melbourne, 1865. (Source: State Library Victoria)

4.4 De Gruchy and Leigh, Isometrical Map of Melbourne, 1866



Figure 4.5 De Gruchy and Leigh, Map of Melbourne, 1866. (Source: State Library Victoria)



South Yarra Heritage Review

Volume 4: Citations

Report prepared for City of Melbourne

September 2022 [\(updated March 2024\)](#)



Acknowledgement of Country

We respect and acknowledge the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, their lands and waterways, their rich cultural heritage and their deep connection to Country, and we acknowledge their Elders past and present. We are committed to truth-telling and to engaging with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to support the protection of their culture and heritage. We strongly advocate social and cultural justice and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Report register

The following report register documents the development of this report, in accordance with GML’s Quality Management System.

Job No.	Issue No.	Notes/Description	Issue Date
2607	1	Final Report	1 September 2022
2607	2	Post Panel Updates	19 March 2024

Quality assurance

The report has been reviewed and approved for issue in accordance with the GML quality assurance policy and procedures.

Indigenous cultural and intellectual property

We acknowledge and respect the inherent rights and interests of the First Peoples in Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to be acknowledged and attributed for their contribution to knowledge but also respect their rights to confidentiality. We recognise our ongoing obligations to respect, protect and uphold the continuation of First Peoples rights in the materials contributed as part of this project.

References to Aboriginal cultural values in this volume have been reviewed and approved by Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

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Cover image

[VE Charnley c1914–1933, 'Synagogue, Toorak Road, South Yarra']. (Source: State Library Victoria: Victorian scenes, 1914-1933)

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Volumes of the South Yarra Heritage Review

The findings of the Review are presented in four volumes:

- Volume 1—Methodology report

Volume 1 explains the methodology used to review and assess the heritage values of precincts and individual places. This Volume also presents the key findings and recommendations of the Review.

- Volume 2—Aboriginal Cultural Values

Volume 2 summarises the outcomes of consultation with Traditional Custodian organisations and provides an assessment of the Aboriginal Cultural Values associated with the Review area. It provides an overview of Aboriginal heritage places in the area listed in Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS) and new information found during historical research and provided by Traditional Custodians during consultation. It provides a rationale in some cases for the potential nomination or change to the extent of Aboriginal heritage places in the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register (VAHR).

- Volume 3—South Yarra Thematic Environmental History

Volume 3 presents an illustrated thematic history of the South Yarra Review area, tracing its physical development and social history complementing the City of Melbourne Thematic Environmental History (Context, 2010). It develops each theme briefly and identifies examples of places for each theme. The thematic history adopts a shared values approach, recognising both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history and cultural values of the broader area and specific places within it.

- Volume 4—Citations (this volume)

Volume 4 contains heritage assessments and recommendations for individual places and precincts. The material is in the form of citations suited to the recognition of a place in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay in the Melbourne Planning Scheme. Aboriginal heritage values have been identified for two places assessed in this Review.

1 Individual place citations

SITE NAME: Fairlie flats
STREET ADDRESS: 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra
PROPERTY ID: 100427



SURVEY DATE:	January 2021	SURVEY BY:	GML Heritage
PLACE TYPE:	Individual Heritage Place	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY:	HO6 South Yarra Precinct
PROPOSED CATEGORY:	Significant	FORMER GRADE:	Ungraded
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths & Simpson	BUILDER:	EA Watts Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945–1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1961

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES:	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES:
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not identify any clear or direct associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	N/A
HISTORICAL THEMES:	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES:
6 Shaping a residential area	6.4 Postwar residential development

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual Heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map.

SUMMARY

Designed by Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths & Simpson, Fairlie was built in 1961 by EA Watts Pty Ltd. The nine-storey Modernist block of flats overlooking the Royal Botanic Gardens is one of the earliest luxury high-rise blocks of flats and is an important early example of this building type, predating the enactment of the *Strata Titles Act 1967*. Embracing modular design aesthetics, Fairlie is distinguished for its delicate design, restricted palette, and the interplay of light and shadow. Its lightweight ground-floor treatment is also distinctive.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Flats in Melbourne

The first purpose-built block of flats in Melbourne, Melbourne Mansions, was erected in Collins Street in 1906. From the 1910s, medium-density housing such as bachelor flats, maisonettes and cooperative developments were popular in Melbourne. Several blocks were constructed prior to World War I, including Fawkner Mansions in South Yarra; Whitehall in Bank Place, Melbourne; and Cliveden Mansions in East Melbourne (O'Hanlon 2008).

During the interwar period, the blocks of flats constructed were mostly along St Kilda Road and Queens Road, as well as in South Yarra, Toorak, East Melbourne, Hawthorn, St Kilda and Parkville. Blocks of flats were mostly low rise, comprising two or three storeys, and were typically let, making them a form of investment in the aftermath of the economic downturn (O'Hanlon 2008). While flats were favoured by single people or young couples, they also became fashionable for the middle-income families in Toorak and South Yarra (Context 2009:145). Some examples in Marne Street and Toorak Road West, South Yarra, were spacious and designed for families. The economic downturn made it unfeasible for many to run a grand home on a large estate, and by the 1930s many large older residences in Melbourne had been divided into flats.

The self-ownership, or 'own-your-own' (OYO), model came about at the end of the 1940s, in response to the problem of inflated building costs, which prevented economic return on investment in flats for rent (*Construction*, 21 April 1954:32). The OYO flats built in Hawthorn in 1949 and Stanhill in Queens Road, Melbourne (1945–50), both designed by Frederick Romberg, were pioneering examples of modern flats and they introduced the model of owner-occupied flats to Melbourne in the postwar period (Heritage Alliance 2008:23). Another leading promoter of 'self-ownership' flats was Sir Bernard Evans (an architect, and lord mayor of Melbourne in 1959–61), who campaigned for apartment buildings in the city and the subsequent introduction of strata title legislation (Butler-Bowden and Pickett 2007:114).

The fact that Melbourne's population was concentrated near the city centre contributed to the development of larger and taller blocks in inner suburbs in the postwar period. As Robin Boyd had pointed out, high-rise residential development was considered a solution for the increased density around the city centre (Serle 1996: Chapter 11).

High-rise residential buildings built in the early 1960s became landmarks on the city's periphery (Heritage Alliance 2008:23). Built on the edge of the Royal Botanic Gardens, the nine-storey Fairlie flats, at 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra (Yuncken Freeman, 1961), was one of the first luxury high-rise block of flats in Melbourne. The 13-storey Edgewater Towers (Mordechai Benshemesh, 1961), on St Kilda Beach, was one of the earliest, completed by October 1961, and was the highest residential tower in Victoria for a short period. The record was broken the following year when the 17-storey Emerald Hill Court, South Melbourne (Sir Bernard Evans, 1962), designed for the Housing Commission of Victoria, and the 20-storey Domain Park, South Yarra (Grounds, Romberg and Boyd, 1962), were completed.

Private developers often called the high-rise blocks 'apartments' (typically between six and 20 or more storeys) for marketing purposes, distinguishing this new type of building from low-rise flats or Housing Commission flats (O'Hanlon 2008).

The introduction of the individual strata title in 1967, following the enactment of the *Strata Titles Act 1967*, led to the apartment boom; however, subsequent developers did not embark upon a battle for height (Heritage Alliance 2008:23; Butler-Bowden and Pickett 2007:114). Domain Park remained the tallest until the end of 1960s, when luxury high-rise blocks of flats were built at the eastern end of the city centre. Viennese-born émigré architect Kurt Popper built two blocks in central Melbourne: the 20-storey Park Tower at 199–207 Spring Street (1969), and a 22-storey block at 13–15 Collins Street

(1970). Treasury Gate at 93–101 Spring Street (Moore & Hammond, 1971) followed the trend with 28 storeys. The 11-storey Exhibition Towers at 287–293 Exhibition Street, Melbourne (Kenneth McDonald & Associates 1969–71), was initially designed as a private residential block but was opened as the Courtesy Inn Motel in 1971 due to low sales.

SITE HISTORY

The place occupies the traditional Country of both the Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people. The land at 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra, which occupies high ground on the steep south bank of the Yarra, was part of an area of 895 acres that was reserved for an Aboriginal mission. George Langhorne's Anglican mission was established in 1837 on the land set aside by Robert Hoddle east of Anderson Street, South Yarra, and closed in 1839 (Clark and Konstanski 2012:31).

The land is part of Crown Allotment 10, purchased in 1846 by Colonel Joseph Anderson with adjacent Allotment 9 (CoMMaps). Anderson built a prefabricated house Fairlie (also known as Fairlie House, Old Fairlie or Fairlie Cottage), named after his mother Fairlie Anderson (née Gordon) who died in 1790, the year that Anderson was born. In 1870, Anderson's eldest son, William Acland Douglas Anderson, erected a villa residence on Crown Allotment 10. This three-storey villa residence was also named Fairlie. After the construction of the second Fairlie, the earlier house was known as Old Fairlie. Following WA Anderson's death, Fairlie was let in 1882. The villa was advertised as a 'spacious and commodious family residence ... situated on the highest ground, next to and overlooking the Botanical gardens and Domain'. The property was set on four acres of 'pleasure grounds, comprising orchard, flower and vegetable gardens, and five lawn-tennis court' (*Argus*, 11 March 1882:5). The property underwent various changes overtime, including subdivision of land and alterations and additions to the houses and outbuildings. The 1870 villa was one of the first Melbourne mansions converted to flats during World War I (*Herald*, 17 September 1937:14; 23 September 1937:3).

When sold in 1936, the property comprised the 1870 villa (by this time most popularly known as Fairlie House) and another two-storey residence known as Little Fairlie. The earlier prefabricated house had been demolished by this time (*Argus*, 12 September 1936:2; Pratt c1937). An adjoining property, comprising a brick residence known as Bonooke, was acquired by the new owner of Fairlie House, who intended to subdivide the site into smaller residential allotments. In October 1937, the building materials and fixtures of Fairlie House and Little Fairlie were sold at a demolition sale, which was followed by the subdivisional sale of Fairlie in December (*Argus*, 2 October 1937:18; 1 December 1937:18). The land at today's 54–60 Anderson Street was vacant until the end of 1950s (S&Mc 1960).

Built in 1960 to a design by Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths & Simpson for the building company Jarden Towers Pty Ltd, Fairlie at 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra, is a nine-storey block of 16 flats overlooking the Royal Botanic Gardens (*Age*, 31 May 1960:3). Acknowledged as the firm's most notable high-rise residential block, Fairlie was designed by John Freeman and Tom Freeman, who were responsible for the firm's residential work, as well as Roy Simpson (Goat 2018:782; Butler-Bowden and Pickett 2007:114).

On 15 May 1960, an application to build a 16-unit block of flats at a cost of £205,000 was submitted to Melbourne City Council (MBAI 1960). The building work began a week later, despite local opposition. Architect Thomas J Buchan, then a City of Melbourne Councillor residing in Fairlie Court, opposed the construction on the grounds of the right of light and maximum height prescribed by the uniform building regulations. Buchan argued that the construction should not be permitted as the proposed structure, including lift machinery, tank and fan rooms, was to rise 17 feet above the permitted maximum height of 88 feet (26.8 m). The building's location on the arterial road was also considered problematic by some. There were concerns that it would cause potential parking issues and create traffic hazards for the 900

pupils of nearby Melbourne Girls Grammar School. Despite the opposition of Buchan and other residents, Melbourne City Council's building committee granted a permit by mid-June 1960 (*Age*, 31 May 1960:3; 16 June 1960:5).

Fairlie was open for inspection by August 1961, a few months earlier than the 13-storey Edgewater Towers (Mordechai Benshemesh, 1961) on St Kilda Beach, which was completed in October 1961 (*Age*, 12 August 1961:2; 25 October 1961:26).

With only two large flats per standard floor, Fairlie was the first luxury postwar block of flats in Melbourne. When it opened in 1961, it held the record for the most expensive flats in Australia; they were priced from £17,850, significantly more than the average price of a three-bedroom suburban home in Melbourne at the time (*Age*, 11 September 1961:10; 12 August 1961:2). The building was equipped with a central heating system and ducted ventilation. Each flat had a large sun terrace and luxury fittings (*Age*, 24 November 1961:2; 27 October 1962:44).

No external building work since the time of its construction is recorded in Melbourne City Council's historical building application index (MBAI). Today, Fairlie remains as private residential apartments.

Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths & Simpson, architect

In the 1960s Melbourne-based Yuncken Freeman was one of the largest architectural practices in Australia, with a reputation for high-quality corporate buildings and an ongoing commitment to Modernism. The firm originated in 1933 when Otto Abrecht Yuncken (1903–1951) established a practice with brothers John Freeman (1898–62) and Tom Freeman (1904–1971). In the 1930s the firm's work concentrated on hospital design and residential work in suburbs that included Toorak, Brighton and South Yarra. William Balcombe Griffiths (1907–1991) and Roy Simpson joined the firm in the mid to late 1930s, and it became known as Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths & Simpson. Notable work during this time included additions to the Austin Hospital, in Heidelberg (1937), overseeing completion of the Sidney Myer tomb at Box Hill Cemetery (1934–38), and designing one of Melbourne's early Modernist houses for Dr Geoffrey Smith in Toorak (1934) (Goad 2012:781–782).

Following World War II, the firm was involved in residential work including the prefabrication housing scheme for the Victorian Government, known as 'Operation Snail', and works for the Preston & Northcote Community Hospital in Preston (1951). The commercial and corporate side of the business was built by Barry Patten (1927–2003) and John Gates (1924–1996) when they joined the firm as partners in 1951, following the death of Yuncken. The Freeman brothers and Simpson focused on residential work and were responsible for projects that included Fairlie in South Yarra (1961). The firm also developed apartment blocks in South Yarra and Toorak for a variety of clients, including AV Jennings (Goad 2012:781–782; Butler-Bowden and Pickett 2007:114).

John Yuncken joined the firm in 1960, and by 1962 it had become known as Yuncken Freeman. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s Yuncken Freeman was the most successful and prolific architecture firm in Victoria, designing many award-winning office buildings in Melbourne's city centre. These included Eagle House at 473 Bourke Street, built in 1971 (VHR1807, HO901); BHP House at 130–148 William Street (VHR1699, HO767); and the Royal Insurance building at 430–442 Collins Street (1965). At the time of its completion, BHP House was the tallest steel-framed building in Australia and the tallest building in Victoria. By this time, the firm had offices around Australia as well as in Hong Kong, and served as a training ground for many of Melbourne's most promising young architects. The firm continued until the late 1980s, and completed work for the University of Melbourne, among many large institutional and corporate clients (Goad 2012:781–782).

SITE DESCRIPTION

Fairlie at 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra, is a nine-storey block of flats with Modernist elements. It is located at the northeast corner of Fairlie Court and Anderson Street, overlooking the Royal Botanic Gardens towards the west (Figure 1). The building has a slight setback, on which garden beds with bluestone edging are formed. Hedging is established along the property boundaries on the north, west and east. The concrete steps with metal balustrades to the portico are provided on Anderson Street (Figure 2).

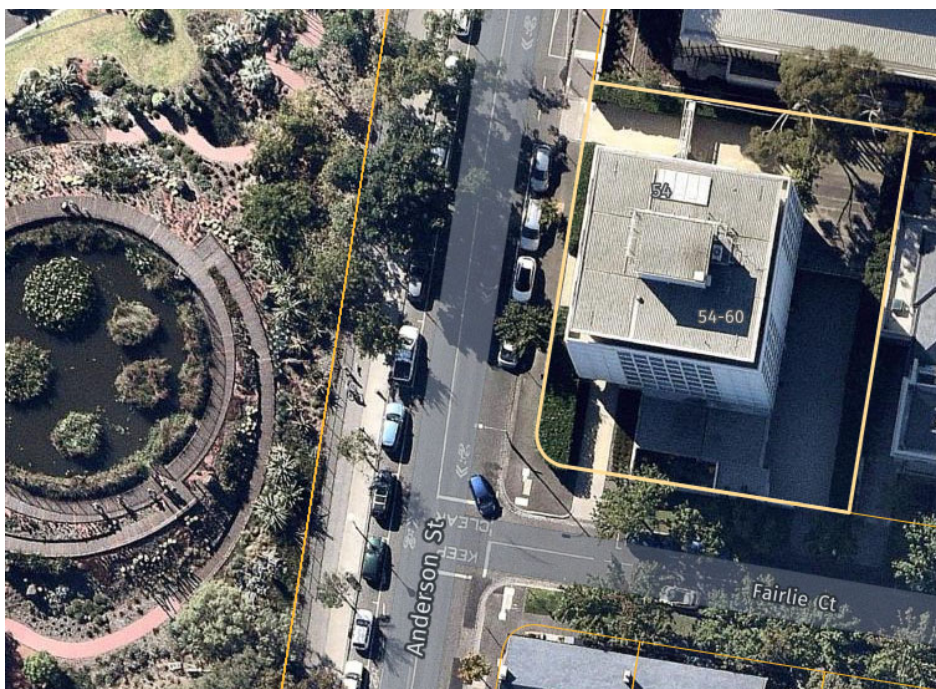


Figure 1. 54–60 Anderson Street, outlined in light yellow. (Source: Nearmap 2021 with GML overlay)



Figure 2. Concrete steps to the entry portico. Note the intact arched pilotis, modular frames and metal balustrading. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

The building has a rectangular plan and is raised above arched pilotis, providing a portico, or porte cochère, with a driveway underneath for covered access to the building from a car (Figure 3). Constructed with reinforced concrete, the expressed floor plates represent the internal structure. The building has a centrally located lift and service well. On the top floor, the penthouse has a flat roof with overhanging eaves and is set in from the building edge. The design of the top floor differs from standard floors between the first and seventh floors, having three two-light windows on each of the east, west and south elevations. On the north elevation, there is a six-bay full-height window flanked by two-light windows on either side.

Over seven levels above the ground floor, the primary (west) elevation features balconies divided into 12 uniform bays. There are two units on each standard floor. One of these units occupies eight bays and the other, four bays. The fully glazed walls are set in from the thin modular prefabricated concrete frames, providing a continuous open balcony across the entire width of each apartment. Thin metal balustrades are installed in between vertical fins. The centrepiece of the ground-floor lobby, the spiral staircase is enclosed by fully glazed walls with security doors with brass handles on both sides (Figure 4).

The 12-bay side (north and south) elevations comprise a curtain wall system with spandrel panels over six central bays. Similarly, the rear (eastern) elevation comprises 12 bays of which the four outer bays to each side are glazed using the same curtain wall system.

Overall, a sense of lightness is expressed by the use of various elements including the floating concrete frames over fully glazed walls, use of arched pilotis and the undercroft with driveway, strips of curtain wall systems on the side and rear elevations, and the glass box-like lobby.

A metal sign featuring the building's name 'Fairlie' is on the brick wall on the right-hand side of the lobby (Figure 5). The brick walls extending from either side of the lobby enclose the rear of the property, where carports are provided. It is likely that the garage doors are later additions (Figure 6).



Figure 3. Entry portico. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 4. View of the portico and lobby enclosed by the fully glazed walls. The entrances are provided on both sides. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 5. Metal signage with lettering 'Fairlie', by the lobby. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 6. Side and rear elevations comprising 12 bays and incorporating vertical strips of curtain walls. Carports at the rear of the property to the east, enclosed within the brick fence. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

INTEGRITY

Fairlie at 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra, is highly intact, with very few changes to original or early fabric. The building retains its original rectangular built form with setbacks from the street. Also intact are the overall sense of lightness, the uniform composition of the primary, side and rear elevations, and the detailing of the exterior. Key detailing includes floating concrete frames over fully glazed walls, the use of arched pilotis, the fully glazed lobby (on the primary elevation), original infill panels, and modular prefabricated concrete frames (on the side and rear elevations). Other key original elements include metal window frames and the spiral staircase in the lobby. The intact original enclosing brick walls on the ground level, and bluestone edging to the garden beds near the entrance, also contribute to the integrity of the place. Changes include the installation of garage doors to the carports and new garden beds and plantings besides the central steps. Overall, the building retains a very high integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Fairlie represents a new building type in its form and aesthetics—namely, the modern residential tower building—that gained popularity in Melbourne in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These architect-designed multistorey flats/apartments adopted Modernist elements and were characterised by their simplicity of structure and minimisation of decoration. Built in Melbourne’s inner suburbs, the earliest high-rise flats are gradually gaining heritage recognition. The 13-storey Edgewater Towers (Mordechai Benshemesh, 1961) on St Kilda Beach, one of the earliest examples in Melbourne, was recommended as an individually significant place by the City of Port Phillip in *Port Phillip Heritage Review Update, 2019* (prepared by David Helms Heritage Planning). The block of flats at 333 Beaconsfield Parade, St Kilda (Sol Sapir, 1968–70), which is noted as the best and biggest example of St Kilda’s high-rise flats, is listed on the Heritage Overlay (HO287, City of Port Phillip).

In the City of Melbourne, the following examples are comparable to Domain Park at 191–201 Domain Road. Four residential towers from the postwar period are on the Heritage Overlay with interim protection and Fairlie flats at 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra, is recommended as individually significant in this study.

Park Tower, 199–207 Spring Street, Melbourne (HO1263)

Designed by émigré architect Kurt Popper, Park Tower is an early example of the residential apartments that emerged in central Melbourne in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The 20-storey residential building has a two-storey base/podium built to the property boundary with a 16-storey tower set back from the street and two levels of basement carparking. It is distinctly Modernist in form and aesthetic, with a curtain-walled façade that features an abstract arrangement of brick spandrels and masonry balconies (Context and GJM Heritage 2020:1190–1203).



Figure 7. 199–207 Spring Street, Melbourne, built in 1969. (Source: Context 2017)

13–15 Collins Street, Melbourne (HO1265)

Also designed by Kurt Popper, 13–15 Collins Street, Melbourne, is an example of residential apartments that emerged in central Melbourne in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Completed in late 1970, 13–15 Collins Street was one of Melbourne’s most luxurious blocks of strata title residential apartments. It is distinctly Modernist in form and aesthetic, with a curtain walled façade that features a rhythmic arrangement of brown brick spandrels and masonry balconies (Context and GJM Heritage 2020:200–207).



Figure 8. 13–15 Collins Street, Melbourne, built in 1970. (Source: Context 2017)

Treasury Gate, 93–101 Spring Street, Melbourne (HO1262)

Treasury Gate was designed by architects Moore & Hammond as a combined office and residential complex. The 28-floor block comprises 19 residential floors, four levels of office spaces, a recreation floor, a ground-level retail floor and three levels of underground parking areas. It is distinctly Modernist in form and aesthetic, and suggestive of the Brutalist style in its deliberate expression of concrete and brick (Context and GJM Heritage 2020:1171–1187).



Figure 9. 93–101 Spring Street, Melbourne, built in 1971. (Source: Context 2018)

Former Exhibition Towers, 287–293 Exhibition Street, Melbourne (HO1333)

The Former Exhibition Towers, a multistorey building on the northwest corner of Exhibition and Little Lonsdale streets, was designed by architect Kenneth McDonald & Associates, for owners Danbry Pty Ltd. It was initially designed and advertised as residential apartments but opened as the Courtesy Inn Motel in 1971 (Context and GJM Heritage 2020:686–702).



Figure 10. 287–293 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, built in 1969–71. (Source: GJM Heritage 2020)

Domain Park, 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra (recommended as an individual heritage place in this Review)

Designed by prominent architect Robin Boyd in 1959, Domain Park was constructed in 1960–62 by Civil and Civic Pty Ltd for Lend Lease Development. The 20-storey Modernist block of own-your-own (OYO) apartments overlooking the Royal Botanic Gardens is a pioneering example of this building type. Embracing the aesthetic preoccupations of the Modernism, Boyd's spatial concerns are reflected in the building's narrow rectangular form with separated service towers and the abstract composition of its façade. Comprising two service towers with a height of 180 feet (55 m), Domain Park was the tallest residential building in Melbourne at the time of its construction.



Figure 11. 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra, completed in 1962. (Source: Context 2021)

As an intact early example of the postwar high-rise flats, Fairlie compares well with the above examples in the City of Melbourne. The subject building demonstrates the key characteristics observed in all examples described above. The characteristic elements include the use of the reinforced concrete frame, non-loadbearing wall surfaces such as curtain walls juxtaposed against the opaque infill panels. The combination of a high level of glazing and open balconies in the primary elevation is a key element. This sets the residential blocks of flats apart from the high-rise office blocks developed around the same period, as these often adopt flat, fully or almost fully glazed façade systems.

Domain Park at 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra (recommended as individually significant in this review), and the inner-city examples such as Park Tower at 199–207 Spring Street (Interim HO1263), 13–15 Collins Street (Interim HO1265), Treasury Gate at 93–101 Spring Street (Interim HO1262) and Exhibition Towers at 287–293 Exhibition Street (Interim HO1333), embraced a slightly different approach with their façade treatments, incorporating bays of open balconies combined with bays of windows. Unlike Fairlie, the use of more traditional domestic material, face brick, as the non-loadbearing cladding or infill, is also typically observed in all these examples.

One of the earliest examples of high-rise apartments in Melbourne, Fairlie is distinguished for its delicate design in terms of its form and modular aesthetics, restricted palette, and the interplay of light and shadow. Its lightweight ground-floor treatment is also distinct from other examples. The façade design, characterised by regularity and consistency, provides depth by way of the uniform composition of the prefabricated concrete grid, echoing many postwar high-rise office designs that reached Melbourne in the mid–1950s. In this case, however, the thin prefabricated concrete modules that float over the fully glazed wall planes provide a continuous open balcony across the entire width of each apartment. In comparison to Domain Park and later inner-city examples, the structure presents a distinctive lightness and delicacy.

Fairlie compares closely with Domain Park, in terms of its construction period and its location close to the edge of the Royal Botanic Gardens. The later examples of inner-city apartments in Melbourne included podiums and ground-level shops, but Fairlie and Domain Park are fully residential.

Characterised by its highly refined design, Fairlie is an important early example of a postwar high-rise block of flats that features elements influenced by Modernist architecture.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

CRITERION A

- ✓ Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
-

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

CRITERION D

- ✓ Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).
-

CRITERION E

- ✓ Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).
-

CRITERION F

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

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).

CRITERION H

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual Heritage place.

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

Melbourne Planning Scheme

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	Yes
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01–4)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

Other

N/A

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PREVIOUS STUDIES

South Yarra Conservation Study 1985 Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Fairlie flats

PS ref no: ~~HOxxx~~ [HO1402](#)



What is significant?

Fairlie at 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra, completed in 1961 to a design by Yuncken Freeman Pty Ltd, is significant.

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

- building's original rectangular form, materials and detailing
- building's high level of integrity to its original design, including the composition of the primary elevation with its intact fully glazed walls behind the prefabricated concrete frames
- detailing of the exterior including the steel-framed pilotis and non-loadbearing vertical curtain walls and opaque cladding on the side (north and south) and rear (east) elevations, as well as the penthouse with projecting eaves
- pattern and size of original metal frame windows and spandrels
- other original elements including fully glazed lobby, spiral stairwell, brick fence enclosing the original carports and the metal signage reading 'Fairlie' by the lobby.

Original bluestone edging to the garden beds near the entrance also contributes to the significance of the place. More recent alterations and additions are not significant.

How is it significant?

Fairlie at 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra, is of local historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

Fairlie is historically significant as one of the earliest high-rise blocks of flats built in Melbourne. Completed in 1961, Fairlie predated the introduction of *Strata Titles Act 1967*. The nine-storey block of flats was designed by Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths & Simpson, one of the largest architectural practices in Australia. Described in 1961 as the most expensive flats in Australia, it was one of the earliest luxury high-rise blocks in Melbourne when completed. The site's connection to the Victorian-era mansion Fairlie House, which formerly occupied the site, is of local interest. (Criterion A)

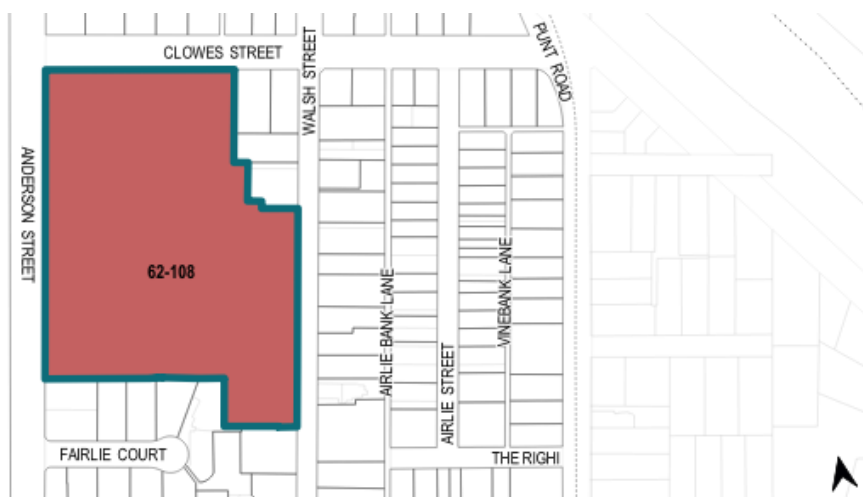
Fairlie is an important early example of a new and distinctive building type that emerged in the 1960s: the high-rise block of flats. The building displays elements influenced by Modernist architecture, characterised by a simplicity of structure and a minimisation of decoration. Its use of prefabricated concrete panels, reinforced concrete construction, and a non-loadbearing curtain wall system are representative of the residential towers built in the City of Melbourne in the 1960s and 1970s. (Criterion D)

Fairlie is aesthetically significant for its demonstration of key elements influenced by Modernist architecture. The rectangular building is raised on arched pilotis, providing a portico with a driveway underneath for covered access to the building from a car. A move away from a traditional loadbearing wall system is evidenced in its use of thin modular prefabricated concrete frames and the use of curtain walls on all elevations. Its lightweight ground-floor treatment is also distinct. Fairlie is distinguished for its delicate design with modular aesthetics, restricted palette, and the interplay of light and shadow. Its visual dominance in the streetscape, as well as the immediate views from the Royal Botanic Gardens, also contribute to the building's aesthetic significance. (Criterion E)

Primary source

South Yarra Heritage Review 2022 ([updated March 2024](#)) (GML Heritage)

SITE NAME: Melbourne Girls Grammar School
STREET ADDRESS: Part 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra
PROPERTY ID: 100426



SURVEY DATE:	April 2021	SURVEY BY:	GML
PLACE TYPE:	Individual Heritage Place	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY:	HO6 South Yarra Precinct
PROPOSED CATEGORY:	Significant	FORMER GRADE:	A
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Oakden & Ballantyne (Merton Hall); North & Williams (assembly hall, now chapel); Reed & Barnes (likely, Yarra House/Phelia Grimwade House); Gawler & Drummond (1930 additions to Phelia Grimwade House, 1937 boarding wing)	BUILDER:	Swanson Brothers (Merton Hall) Clements Langford Pty Ltd (1937 boarding wing)
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Victorian Period (1851–1901) Federation/Edwardian Period (1902–c1918) Interwar Period (c1919–c1940) Postmodern (c1975–c2000)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	c1881–c1967

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES:	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES:
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not identify any clear or direct associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	N/A
HISTORICAL THEMES:	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES:
8 Education	8.2 Private schools

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of part of 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map.

SUMMARY

Melbourne Girls Grammar School at 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra, is a large Anglican girls' school located opposite the Royal Botanic Gardens. The school originally occupied Merton Hall at another location in South Yarra. In 1900 it relocated to a new purpose-built building at the current site. As the number of enrolments grew, the school expanded the campus in a piecemeal fashion through the purchase of neighbouring properties. New buildings, including the school assembly hall (now Chapel of St Luke), and extensions, were constructed between 1910–19 and 1930–37. The school is notable as the first Anglican girls' school in Victoria, and for being the place of education of many significant women in Victorian and Australian history.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Private girls' schools in Melbourne

Education in Melbourne's early settlement period was provided by government-aided institutions, by private (independent) schools established by the various Christian denominations, or at home by private tutors or governesses. Following separation of Victoria from the Colony of New South Wales in 1851, a dual system of education was established in Victoria. The Denominational Schools Board was responsible for administering private schools while the National Schools Board was responsible for public schools. In 1862 these two boards were abolished and replaced with the Board of Education, which funded both private and public schools. In addition to the private and public schools, a third category of educational institution was introduced in 1854, called 'public grammar schools'; the University of Melbourne was established that year and these schools would prepare boys for university entrance (Hooper 2008).

The major Christian denominations had each aspired to a church-run 'grammar' school for boys, with Melbourne Grammar School and Wesley College being established in South Yarra and Scotch College and St Patrick's College established in East Melbourne in the 1850s and 1860s. While a number of church-run boys' schools were established in Melbourne from its early period of development, there were initially no church-run secondary schools for girls apart from classes provided by Catholic convents. Girls from middle-class families were taught at home or attended small private girls' schools close to home.

Although girls' education continued to fall significantly short of that provided for boys, the Catholic, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches recognised the need for similar institutions for girls. The Academy of Mary Immaculate was founded in Fitzroy in 1857, Presbyterian Ladies College in East Melbourne in 1875, and the Methodist Ladies College in Kew in 1882. Many small non-denominational girls' schools opened in the fashionable suburbs of Melbourne, although most were not permanent institutions. Usually opened in private homes, these schools were characterised by their small student numbers and were often conducted by only one or two teachers who typically owned the institution.

SITE HISTORY

Melbourne Girls Grammar School at 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra, comprises a complex of buildings repurposed, constructed and modified in successive waves of development. The following map indicates the names and build dates of the buildings that currently occupy the site (Figure 1). Two houses fronting Walsh Street (known as 283 and 285 Walsh Street) are part of the school premises at 62–108 Anderson Street, but are excluded from the extent of the overlay.



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|--|----|---|
| 1 | Merton Hall (1900) and rear extension (1919, after 1938) | 8 | Jessie Bage House (1979) |
| 2 | Chapel of St Luke (former Assembly Hall) (1917) | 9 | Nina Crone Library (1987, 2006) |
| 3 | Phelia Grimwade House (former Yarra House) (1881–82) | 10 | Christine Briggs Building (2004) |
| 4 | Phelia Grimwade House extension (1930) | 11 | Hub (c2010s) |
| 5 | Gilman Jones Hall (1937) | 12 | Wildfell Centre (2010) |
| 6 | Former Nursery (c1940) | 13 | Artemis Centre (2014–17) |
| 7 | Ross Hall and Edith Mountain Centre (c1970–80s) | 14 | Two c1930s residences known as 281 and 285 Walsh Street (incorporated as part of the complex in the late twentieth century) |

Figure 1. Aerial photograph of 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra (dashed outline), with key buildings (Numbers 1–6) and later structures (Numbers 7–13). Note 62–108 Anderson Street includes two residences fronting Walsh Street (Number 14), which are not integral to the key period of development of the site. Pink denotes structures constructed from the 1970s. (Source: Nearmap 2022 with GML overlay)

The place occupies the traditional Country of both the Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people. The land at 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra, is part of Crown Allotment 10, which was purchased by Colonel Joseph Anderson in 1846; Anderson had also purchased adjacent Allotment 9 (PROV VPRS 16171). Both land parcels were opposite the Botanic Gardens, which had been used as an Aboriginal mission in the late 1830s and remained an area occupied by Aboriginal people into the 1840s.

In the late 1840s, Colonel Anderson constructed a bungalow (believed to have been imported from India), in the general location of the current Artemis Centre (Figure 1: Number 13). Anderson named it Fairlie after his mother, Fairlie née Gordon, who died in 1790, the year he was born (Theobald 2009:33; Ancestry.com). Anderson died in 1870 and his son, Colonel W A D Anderson, built a new family residence that year, which was also named Fairlie. This was situated south of the school boundaries. After the construction of the second 'Fairlie', the earlier house was known as Old Fairlie. During the 1870s, it appears that Old Fairlie was briefly rented by a school known simply as the Ladies' College, South Yarra, which was operated by the Thompson sisters (Theobald 2009:33). They left the site within a matter of years, by which point they had also sold their small private school.

Melbourne Girls Grammar School was founded in 1893 as Merton Hall on Domain Road, South Yarra, by Emily Hensley and Alice Taylor. Taylor and Hensley had arrived in Melbourne in 1890 to take charge of the Trinity College Hostel (which would eventually become Janet Clarke Hall) at the University of Melbourne. Hensley had been one of the first five female students to attend Cambridge University. The name Merton Hall is drawn from the house that accommodated the newly founded Newnham College, the second women's college at Cambridge, where Hensley had been a resident (*Argus*, 14 April 1928:8).

Hensley became the sole administrator at the school when Taylor left her role after getting married in 1895. The school was subsequently purchased in 1898 by WE Morris, the registrar for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, to be run by his two daughters Mary and Edith Morris (*Argus*, 14 April 1928:8). The school was renamed as the Melbourne Church of England Girls Grammar School in 1900, becoming the first official Anglican girls school in Victoria (*Argus*, 9 February 1900:3). It was noted at this time that the school had acquired land (just north of Old Fairlie) on Anderson Street where they planned to build a new schoolhouse.

The new Merton Hall building (Figure 1: Number 1) was designed by Oakden & Ballantyne, and constructed by the Swanson Brothers in 1900 (Woods 1984:21; *Church of England Messenger for Victoria*, 1 December 1900:188). The following description of the new Merton Hall building was published in December of 1900:

... the buildings occupy a commanding site overlooking the new Anderson Street bridge. The site is bounded on the west by Anderson Street, fronting which street is the main building for residential purposes. This building is three storeys high, and contains 27 rooms, together with ample bathrooms and other sanitary accommodation, besides bicycle rooms, &c, in the basement. At the rear of, but attached to, and communicating directly with this building is the scholastic portion forming the eastern wing of the group, and containing six school and classrooms, besides lavatories and all other sanitary appointments. The access to the upper school and classrooms is by a stone staircase with fireproof landings and approaches.

The two large schoolrooms on the ground floor are divided by sliding doors, so that they may be used as one large hall for opening services, and for any other proceedings in which the whole school is expected to join. The size of this hall is 48ft. x 20ft. The walls are of red brick, with bands and arches of light and dark moulded brick, and with dressings of freestone and cemented weathering. The roofs are covered in Marseilles tiles. The eaves have a very bold projection; and the gables are treated with framed barge boards and vertical tiling. The interior treatment is simple but effective, the greatest attention being paid to securing abundance of light and efficient ventilation.

The ceilings throughout the residential portion are of plaster; those of the schoolrooms of panelled Californian pine, with cornices in the same material. On the eastern boundary of the ground adjoining Walsh Street will be placed a tennis court and gymnasium, leaving a wide playground between the court and the rear of the school. There will also be entrances from Walsh Street, both for scholars and vehicles, together with stables of ponies, buggy shed &c. (Church of England Messenger for Victoria, 1 December 1900:188).

Advertisements for the school, placed in newspapers in early 1901, indicate that the new premises had been completed (*Australasian*, 9 February 1901:4). The school was formally taken over by the Anglican diocese in 1903 (*Argus*, 14 April 1903:8).

The school quickly acquired Old Fairlie for overflow accommodation of boarding students, however it was likely demolished to make way for Morris Hall, the school's new kindergarten and preparatory school in 1910 (*Sunday Sun*, 11 September 1910:10). This building has also since been demolished, with Morris Hall moving to a site on Caroline Street, South Yarra.

Tenders were called by architects North & Williams for the construction of a new assembly hall (Figure 1: Number 2) at the Melbourne Church of England Girls Grammar School in August 1916; the building was completed in 1917 (*Herald*, 24 August 1916:5; MGS 2021a; Woods 1984:48–49).

Alterations and additions at a cost of £6000 were undertaken to the school (Figure 1: Number 1) in 1919, and it is likely that these additions were to the rear wing of Merton Hall (MBAI 1875). Further alterations to this wing, including the construction of a short octagonal tower, were undertaken at an unknown date after c1938 (Woods 1984:48–49).

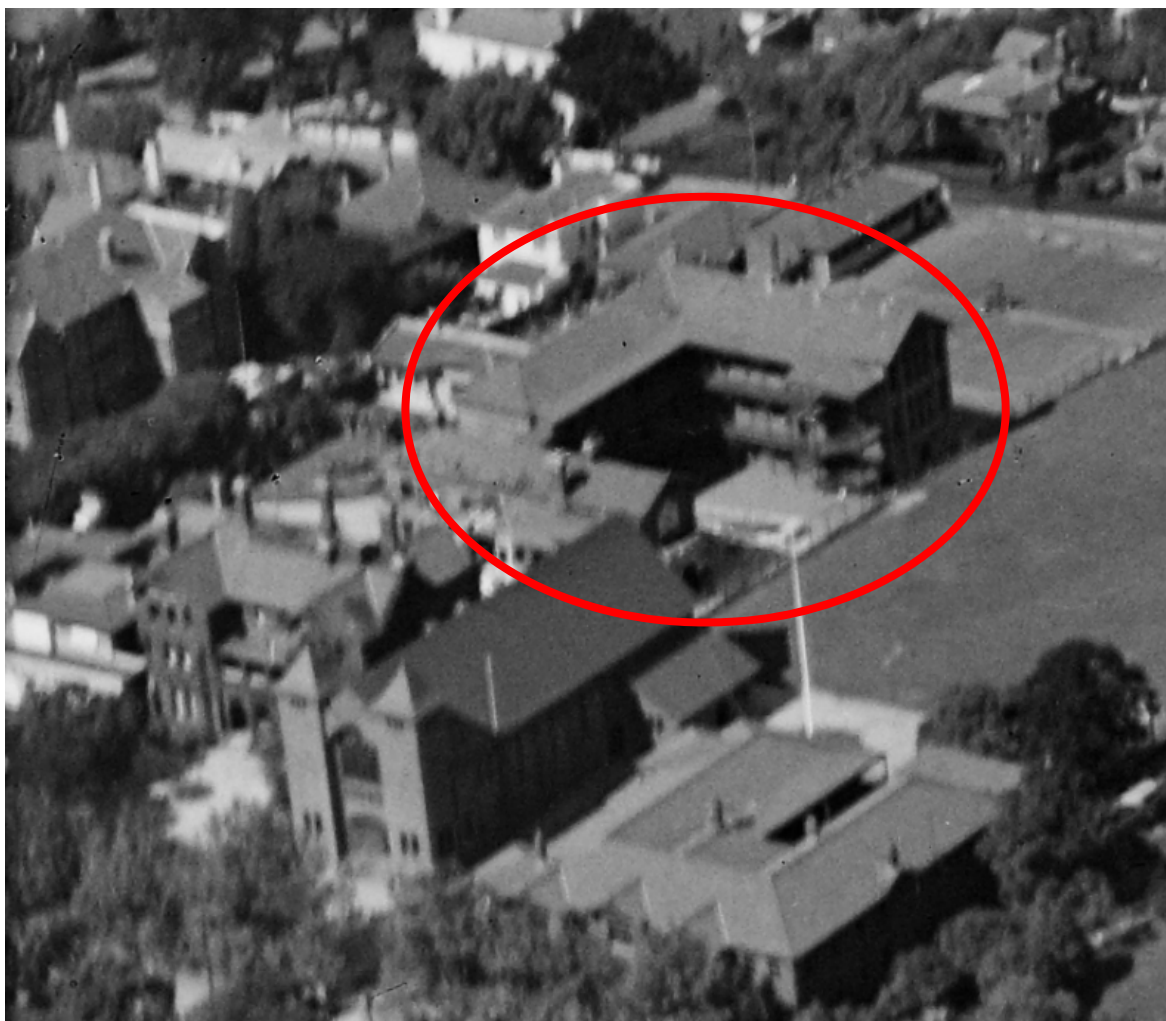


Figure 2. Detail from a c1937 aerial photograph of South Yarra taken by Charles Daniel Pratt, showing the Melbourne Girls Grammar site. The short octagonal tower on the rear wing of Merton Hall had not yet been built at this time. (Source: Charles D Pratt c1937, State Library Victoria: Airspy collection, Accession No. H91.160/1709)

The school acquired the building known as Yarra House (Figure 1: Number 3), on the corner of Anderson Street and Clowes Street, in 1929 from E Norton Grimwade (Figure 3). Yarra House was constructed between 1881 and 1882 for William Cain, a successful builder, businessman, pastoralist, councillor, and Member of the Upper House. Cain died in 1914, and it is likely the house remained in the family until at least that time (Hone, 1969). Although the architect has not been confirmed, it is widely believed to have been designed by Reed & Barnes (Goad 2004:72–73). Grimwade purchased the property in 1923, when it was occupied by a guesthouse, and he took up residence in 1925 (*Herald*, 23 April 1923:5).

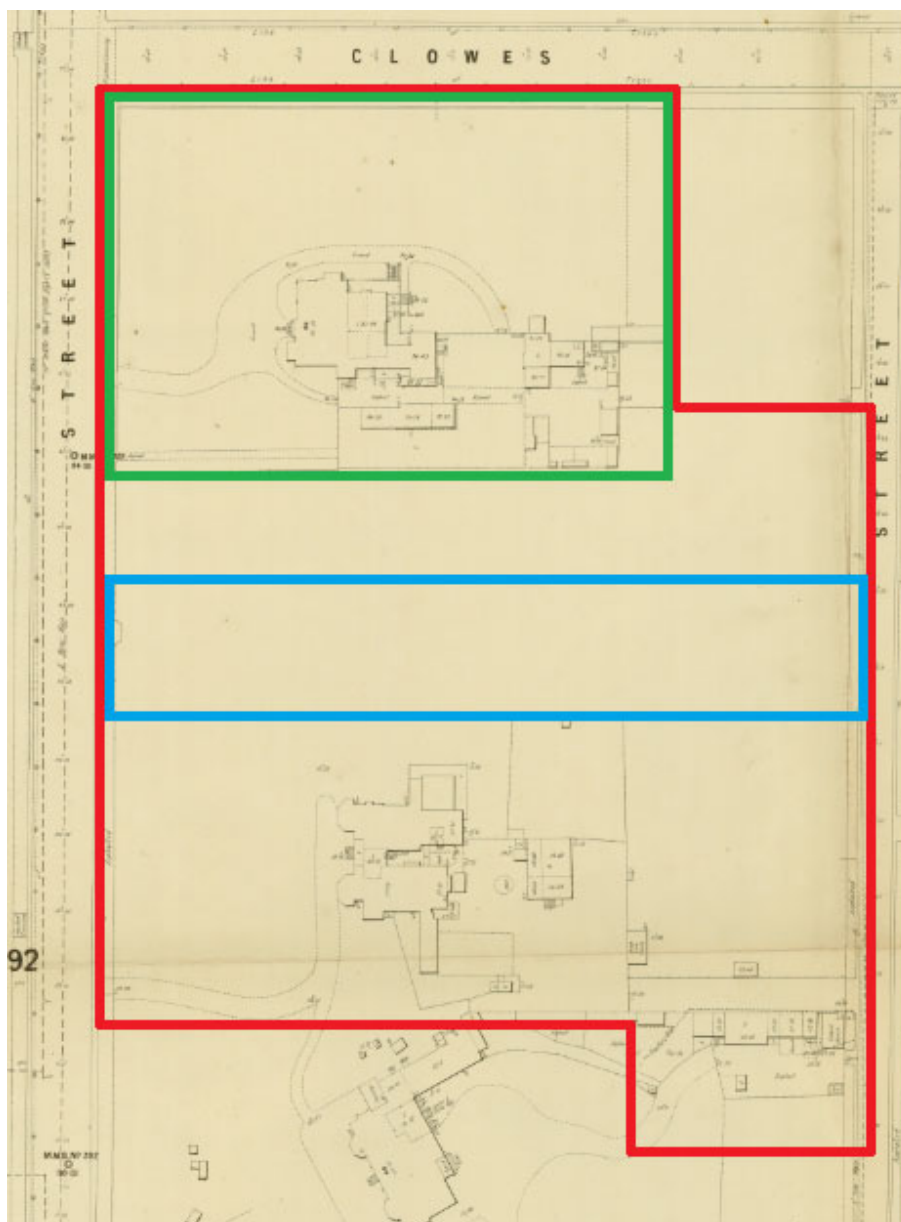


Figure 3. Extract from MMBW detail plan no 891, dated 1895, with the red border showing the current land parcel of the school, excluding the Early Learning Centre. The Yarra House property is bordered in green; the blue indicates the size of the land initially acquired for the new schoolhouse. (Source: State Library Victoria)

The school's purchase of Yarra House was assisted by Grimwade, who offered the building to the school at a highly reduced price. In honour of this, the building was renamed Phelia Grimwade House, after E Norton Grimwade's wife (*Herald*, 28 May 1930:17). The Grimwades had initially intended to subdivide the land into villa allotments, however made the offer upon hearing of the school's need to expand. The family gave a sizeable cash donation to the school at the same time (*Argus*, 26 July 1929:7). Grimwade also donated a set of doors, removed from a medieval monastery in Granada (Spain), to adorn the front entry to Phelia Grimwade House (now the school reception).

In 1930, the school undertook extensive additions to Phelia Grimwade House (Figure 1: Number 4) in order to accommodate boarding students (Figure 4). The cost of the extensions to Phelia Grimwade house were expected to be £12,000 (*Herald*, 31 January 1930:1).

The new portion of the building was designed by Gawler & Drummond, and was described in a newspaper article prior to the commencement of works:

A series of large, airy sleep-out bedrooms will face east, with window space occupying practically the entire wall. On the other side of each storey is situated a number of smaller bedrooms for those who prefer them, and ample sanitary bathing and shower accommodation fitted with a plentiful hot water supply and with tiled walls and impervious floors and ceilings. The ground floor of this wing is entirely occupied by the dining room, to seat 200. It is planned to accommodate not only the boarders, but also a large number of day girls who desire to have dinner at school. The present kitchen wing of the house is to be enlarged and remodelled to form an ideal up-to-date kitchen and offices. The walls will be tiled, and the floors finished in impervious materials. Cooking will be done by gas and electricity.

The fine rooms in the existing house will hardly be touched. The drawing room, entrance hall, hall, boarders' sitting rooms and private dining room are all finished beautifully. The floors of rich parquetry, the panelled walls, decorated ceilings, and elaborate light fittings will give a setting to the house that will be very comfortable and attractive to both girls and staff. All the important rooms are heated with a system of hot-water radiators.

It is proposed to follow the construction of the present house as far as possible. Brick walls and slate roof will, of course, be used. The windows, however, will be of metal sprayed with zinc, and the walls finished in cement sand-finish, giving a modern soft tone, and at the same time a hard surface not easily damaged. Some of the floors are to be finished in linoleum glued down to concrete undercoat: others are to be polished Australian hardwood.

An escape staircase of concrete is housed in the tower shown at the corner of the new wing, while the necessary water tanks are housed in the top of the new tower. In the basement, where some accommodation is available owing to the fall in the ground, a number of practise rooms are placed, somewhat conveniently away from the teachers' staff rooms (Herald, 28 May 1930:17).

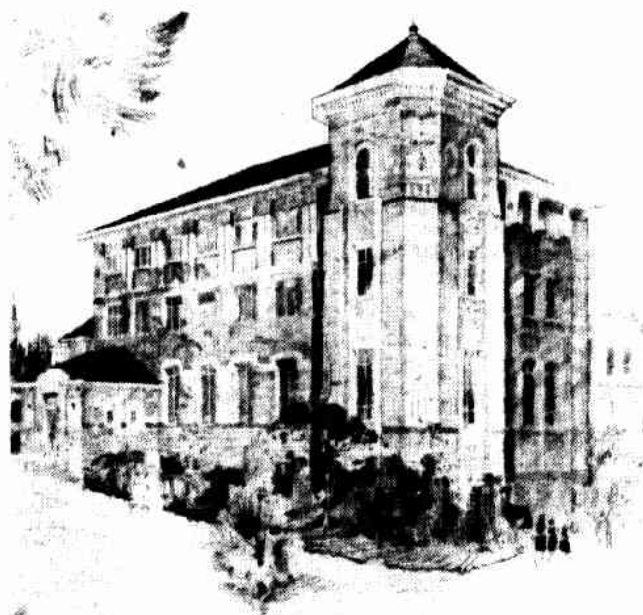


Figure 4. A sketch of the new extension to Phelia Grimwade House (formerly Yarra House), published prior to construction in 1930. (Source: *Herald*, 28 May 1930:17)

A new boarding house (Figure 1: Number 5), initially to be named New Merton Hall, was built to designs by Gawler & Drummond in 1937 and constructed by Clements Langford (Figure 5) (*Herald*, 8 May 1937:6). The building was estimated to take 18 weeks to complete, at a cost of £12,000. The building was instead named Gilman Jones Hall in honour of the long-serving principal Kathleen Gilman Jones, during whose tenure it was built. The building was to be connected to the adjacent Phelia Grimwade

House by a covered walkway (Age, 7 May 1937:11). The name Merton Hall is evident in stained glass above the principal entry to the building.

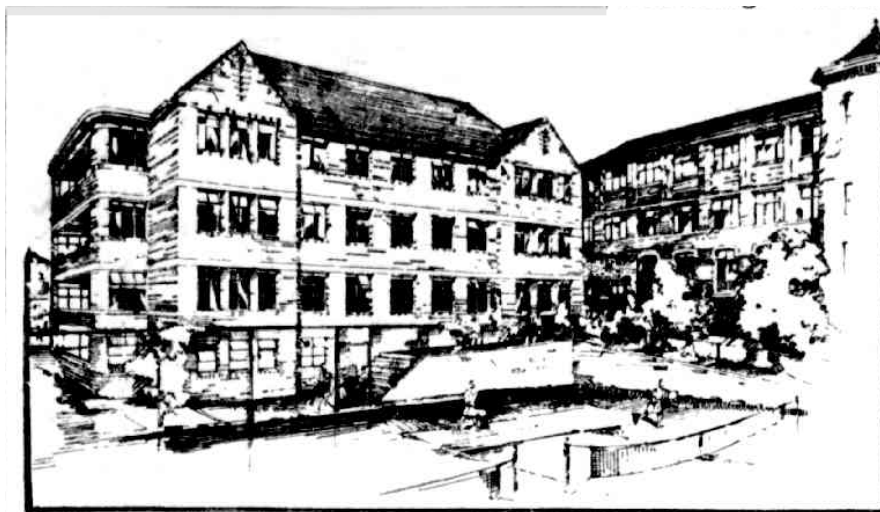


Figure 5. A sketch of the New Merton Hall, later Gilman Jones Hall (accommodation for boarding students), published in May 1937 just prior to building works commencing. (Source: *Herald*, 8 May 1937:6)

A large c1920s house named Greyholm, located between Phelia Grimwade House and Merton Hall, was purchased by the school in 1948. The building was remodelled as a pre-primary school before being renamed Ross Hall, in honour of the principal DJ Ross (Woods 1984:123). The building was later demolished, likely in the 1970s, and replaced with the current Ross Hall and Edith Mountain Centre. A small timber structure (Figure 1: Number 6) located in the gardens of Phelia Grimwade House, near the corner of Anderson Street and Clowes Street, was built as a classroom for nursery students. This may have occurred in 1940, when it was noted that a playroom was constructed on the site (MBAI 21498). The small structure was used as a garden shed before being repurposed as an office, likely during the early 2000s.

In 1967, the original assembly hall was consecrated as the Chapel of St Luke, providing the school with a place of worship. Prior to this, Christ Church, 677 Punt Road, South Yarra, was used by the school. The conversion of the hall into a chapel included the insertion of a floor dividing the building into two levels), creating an under-croft area, and with the chapel occupying the entire first floor of the building. To mark the building's conversion to a chapel, the school's Old Grammarians Association donated a large stained-glass window, inserted on the western façade. The Old Grammarians have since donated multiple other windows for installation in the chapel, the most recent being in memory of Dorothy Jean Ross, principal of the school between 1939 and 1955. Some of these windows have been created by the artist David Wright OAM (MGGS 2021b).

Multiple later additions have been made to the school site. These include, but are not limited to, a new library and science centre (1961, since demolished), Jessie Bage House (Figure 1: Number 8, 1979), Ross Hall and the Edith Mountain Centre (Figure 1: Number 7, likely c1970–1980s), the Nina Crone Library (Figure 1: Number 9, 1987, remodelled in 2006), the Christine Briggs Building (Figure 1: Number 10, 2004), The Hub (Figure 1: Number 11, likely c2010s), the Wildfell Centre (Figure 1: Number 12, 2010), and the Artemis Centre (Figure 1: Number 13, 2014–17). Other work has been undertaken on the sporting fields. The school has also purchased numerous properties on Walsh Street and Clowes Street for its use.

Percy Oakden, architect

Percy Oakden was born in Launceston, Tasmania. Educated in Ross and articled in Hobart, Oakden later went to London to work under Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt, which gave him experience in the popular classical and Gothic Revival styles of the time. Oakden returned to Australia in 1868, where he joined JH Fox in partnership, and was responsible for designs including the Wesleyan Church in Brunswick (Edquist, 2012:508).

In 1874, Oakden became a junior partner of Leonard Terry, forming Terry & Oakden. Terry had gained popularity for his designs for the Melbourne Club, 36 Collins Street, Melbourne, and many Gothic Revival churches. Following Terry's death in 1884, Oakden took GHM Addison into partnership, and the firm was later renamed Terry, Oakden & Addison. In 1886, HH Kemp joined the office, which again restyled as Oakden, Addison & Kemp. Notable works by the firm include Queen's College at the University of Melbourne, and the 12-storey Queen Anne style Australia Building in Elizabeth Street, now demolished but once the tallest building in Melbourne. The partnership was dissolved under the pressures of the 1890s depression, after which Oakden returned to solo practice (Edquist 2012:508).

In 1901, Oakden took Cedric Ballantyne into partnership, forming Oakden & Ballantyne. Ballantyne had been his former pupil and drafter, and brought with him a preference for the Arts and Crafts style that would come to be associated with the firm in the early years of the twentieth century (Edquist, 2012:508).

North & Williams, Architects

The firm of North & Williams was formed by Alexander North and Louis Reginald Williams (Maidment, 1988). North was born in England, where he studied at the Lambeth School of Art. After winning awards for his drawings of cathedrals in the National Competition of Schools of Art, he left for Australia, arriving in 1885. North was involved in many partnerships over the following years and gained a reputation for being an 'outstanding' church architect. North eventually became the architect for the Diocese of Hobart, and while practising in Tasmania became a fellow of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in 1902 (Maidment 1988). After this, he formed the Tasmanian Association of Architects (acting as president at multiple times). By now practising as North and Williams, the firm moved to Melbourne in 1913 (Maidment 1988).

The firm continued their church work in Melbourne, and perhaps the best-known example of their designs is the Chapel for Trinity College at the University of Melbourne, described as 'an architectural triumph' (Maidment, 1988). The partnership of North and Williams dissolved in 1920; both partners continued to work on extensive church commissions (Maidment 1988).

Reed & Barnes, Architects

The firm of Reed & Barnes was formed in 1862 by Joseph Reed (1822–1890) and Frederick Barnes (1823–1884). Reed was born in Cornwall, England, and professionally trained in London, before moving to Melbourne in 1853. Arriving during a period of great wealth brought on by the gold rush, Reed was faced with many opportunities to design substantial buildings for the growing city. Reed's first major success was the 1854 design for the Melbourne Public Library (now the State Library Victoria). This was quickly followed by commissions for a Collins Street bank and a Wesleyan church in Lonsdale Street. Following other successful designs for residences, town halls and places of worship, Reed became the architect for the University of Melbourne and was responsible for many of the early buildings on the campus. He was also the first elected member of the Victorian Institute of Architects in 1856 (Tibbits and Goad 2012:586–587).

Frederick Barnes had arrived in Melbourne from London in 1852, and had worked for Reed since at least 1856. When he joined Reed as a partner in 1862, the firm continued their large commissions, however their designs became increasingly eclectic. Reed's trip to Europe in 1863 gave him further inspiration, evident in the Romanesque references and polychromatic brickwork that appeared in many of his designs from this period. Examples of his application of polychromatic brickwork designs include the Independent Church on Collins Street, St Jude's in Carlton, and the residential mansion Rippon Lea designed for Frederick Sargood (Tibbits and Goad, 2012:587). Showing the versatility of Reed & Barnes's work, the firm also designed the more restrained Melbourne Town Hall in the French Second Empire Style, the classically styled Trades Hall in Carlton, and the gothic-designed Scots Church on Collins Street (Tibbits and Goad 2012:587).

The firm achieved even further widespread fame with their design for the Royal Exhibition Building in 1878–80. The building was designed on the scale of a cathedral, surmounted with a large Florentine style dome, which continues to be a significant landmark in Melbourne.

Barnes resigned from the practice in the early 1880s due to illness, and died in 1884. By 1883, Reed had taken new partners into the firm, becoming Reed, Henderson & Smart. The firm continued to be successful after Reed's death, but the name of the practice changed multiple times as different partners joined and departed. The firm continues today under the name Bates Smart (Tibbits and Goad 2012:588).

Gawler & Drummond, Architects

Melbourne firm Gawler & Drummond practised from 1914 to 1940 and are best known for their association with the University of Melbourne. Their work includes additions to the southern ends of the east and west wings and cloisters of the University of Melbourne quadrangle (1854–57) in the 1920s, the Grainger Museum (1935–36, 1938), and the Metallurgy Building (1939) (Goad 2012:269). British-born John Gawler (1885–1978) had travelled extensively across the United States, England and Europe, and these influences were later expressed through use of novel architectural techniques such as brick veneer construction. His work with Walter Alexander Drummond (1890–1930) also included the Arts and Crafts style Baptist Church in Coburg (1918), Romanesque style Church for the Deaf and Dumb [*sic*] Society in Jolimont (1929–30), as well as numerous domestic, commercial and industrial buildings (Goad 2012:269).

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Melbourne Girls Grammar School at 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra has been continually used as a place of education for over 160 years, serving its pupils past and present, parents, families, teachers, benefactors, and administrators on site since 1854. Community connections are demonstrated in this longstanding use and the school retains a visible and active presence in the community. The school holds close connections with the community of women who have been educated there, their families and former staff. The school community's connection with the site is especially evident in the Chapel of St Luke, where the Old Collegians' Association has been responsible for the donation of multiple stained glass memorial windows which provide a tangible link to previous generations. The Chapel continues to be used by members of the community as their principal place of worship, and for major life events such as weddings and funerals.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Melbourne Girls Grammar School at 62–108 Anderson Street in South Yarra, is an example of a large site that has been continuously developed for use by a single school since 1900. The site is bounded by Anderson Street to the west, Clowes Street to the north, Walsh Street to the east and residential dwellings to the south.

The site is characterised by its consistent use of red face brick and terracotta or slate roofing across the various phases of development. Other details such as articulated brickwork, render banding, arched windows and vertical elements like towers, provide a continuity between buildings. The two earliest buildings on the site, Phelia Grimwade House and Merton Hall, are united in scale, materiality and their setback from Anderson Street. These buildings create a reference point for many of the later additions, which appear to be designed to consciously complement existing structures and incorporate similar materials or details. Contemporary structures on the site are easily distinguished from earlier fabric, and indicate careful site planning.

The site is surrounded on all road boundaries with significant fencing and retaining walls built variously in red brick and bluestone, with sandstone or render detailing. The section of fencing on Anderson Street, at the front of the Merton Hall building, chapel and Artemis Centre, features Art Nouveau detailing and ornate wrought iron gates bearing the school crest. The original or early boundary wall at the front of Phelia Grimwade House is completed in brick above a bluestone foundation. The bluestone foundation acts as a retaining wall for the garden behind it; thus the wall appears significantly higher when viewed from the street. This wall, which wraps around the Clowes Street frontage, is adorned with sandstone pillars at the primary entry, along with two pedestrian gates with sandstone lintels.

A section of wall on Anderson Street in front of Ross Hall is completed in precast concrete panels with an arch motif, and is set back from the footpath to allow for a garden bed. Although this section breaks with the continuity of the red brick fencing either side of it on Anderson Street, it is a ~~likely~~ [likely](#) remnant from the interwar house that had stood on that land prior to the school's ownership.

Part of the Walsh Street frontage of the site features a large red brick retaining wall with buttresses, which allows for the levelling of the land above for use as sporting fields. As the land falls to the north, this retaining wall gains significant height before terminating at the Wildfell Building.

The site features a number of mature trees of various species. A range of trees are especially evident in the former gardens of Phelia Grimwade House, near the corner of Clowes Street and Anderson Street (see descriptions and locations under 'Mature trees' below).

Views to the school, and from within the school, have evidently been considered in the development of the site. This is particularly demonstrated at Phelia Grimwade House, placed prominently on the corner of Clowes Street and Anderson Street with designed elevations to both sides. The site's garden setting enhances the visual presentation of the school and creates a visual relationship with the Royal Botanic Gardens on the opposite side of Anderson Street.

The following descriptions of elements in the subject site is to be read in conjunction with the site plan (Figure 1).

Merton Hall, including rear wing (1901, c1919 and later additions) (Figure 1: Number 1)

Merton Hall is a large, three-storey red brick building with symmetrical façade. The building has a transverse terracotta tiled hipped roof with projecting west facing gable roof bays to either end (Figure 6). The building exhibits extensive use of polychromatic brick work and render detailing. Bands of brickwork and render wrap around the building at different heights. Five chimneys are extant on the original 1901 built form (Figure 7). Windows are predominantly double hung with low arched heads.

Between the two projecting gable sections of the main (west) façade is a two-storey verandah. At the ground floor, the verandah features three brick arches. The arches are emphasised by cream brick and render detailing. The arches are supported with brick columns, with a band of dark bricks with render capitals located at the spring point of the arches. The upper floor of the verandah has open balustrading in pressed cement, with the central section projecting slightly and supported by a row of brick corbels. The terracotta roof is supported by brick columns with rendered capitals.

The two projecting gable sections of the main (west) façade feature bay windows and buttresses to the ground and first floors (Figure 8). The bay windows have symmetrically set paired windows at both levels with square headed windows at ground floor and segmental arch headed windows to the first floor. At the second floor, the wall plane projects to the depth of the bay windows below. At this floor, both wings feature two windows flanking a central blind window. The central section of the building above the verandah has a row of windows. The windows to the second floor have segmental arch heads. The gable ends of the two projecting wings feature shingle tiles and large brackets.



Figure 6. The principal (west) façade of the Merton Hall. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

The rear wing that extends from the north of the building is also constructed in red face brick with terracotta tiled roofs. This wing stretches east before returning southwards to form an elongated U-shape form (Figure 7). This portion of the building is generally less ornamented, however the south façade features terracotta detailing set within the gable end (Figure 9). The octagonal tower is built into the centre of the southern elevation. It features a terracotta tiled roof, cornice and chamfered corners (Figure 7). Recent infill development has been added on the southern façade, on either side of the octagonal tower, and is known as the Arts Centre.

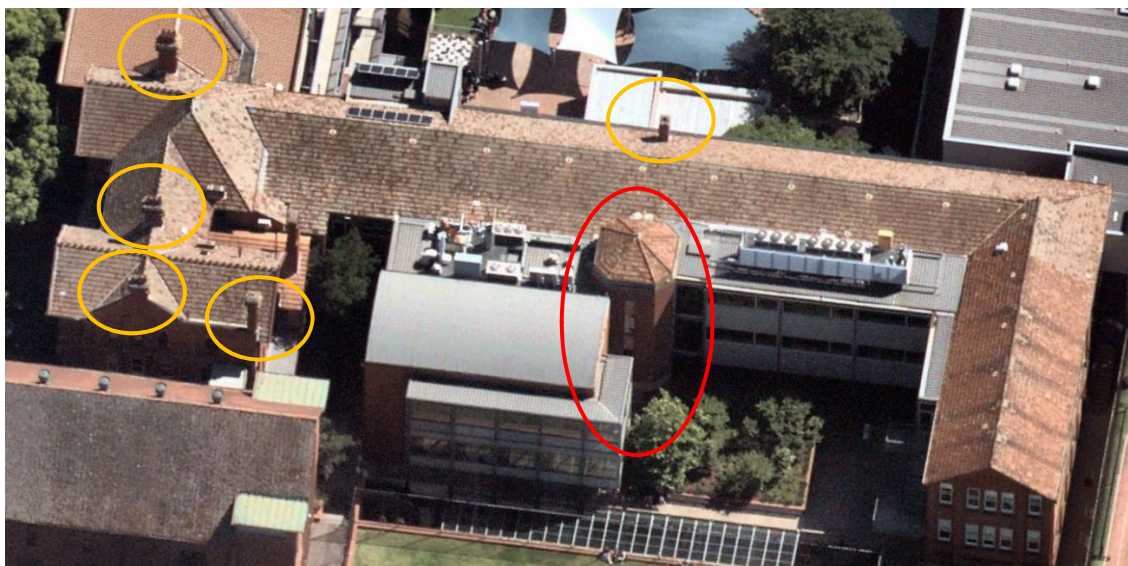


Figure 7. Detail from aerial photograph showing the U-shaped built form. The octagonal tower is outlined in red, on either side of the tower infill development is visible. Outlined in yellow are extant chimneys. (Source: Nearmap 2020)



Figure 8. Photograph showing projecting wing. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

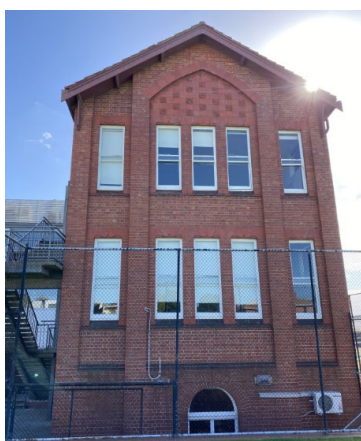


Figure 9. Photograph showing part of the southern façade of the rear extension. The terracotta tile detailing on the gable end is visible. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 10. Side elevation of Merton Hall, facing east. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Chapel of St Luke (former assembly hall, 1916 and 1967) (Figure 1: Number 2)

The chapel is a two-storey, rectilinear redbrick building with steep terracotta shingle gable roof. The principal façade faces west and is dominated by two symmetrically placed square towers with copper bell-cast roofs that tightly frame the large gable end (Figure 11). At the centre of the gable end is a large Gothic-style opening containing a stained-glass window (added 1967). Between the window and the doorway is an inset terracotta panel with Art Nouveau inspired detailing and the school crest. The centrally placed front door has a large stained-glass fanlight. There is another large Gothic-style stained-glass window on the eastern façade (Figure 12). Windows on this building feature terracotta mullions. A covered stairway projects on the north side of the façade. To the rear of the building (facing east), a small single-storey portion to the south of the building has been demolished. The roofline on this façade has been altered to allow for the addition of dormer windows (Figure 13).



Figure 11. The principal elevation of the Chapel of St Luke. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

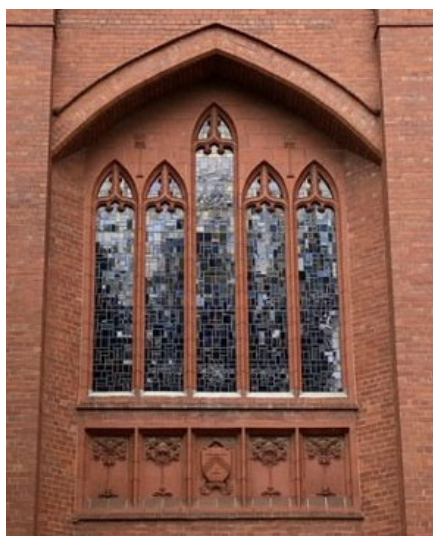


Figure 12. Detail showing stained glass windows, terracotta panelling, and fine brickwork. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 13. Rear façade of the chapel, facing east. The addition of dormer windows has changed the profile of this roofline, evident in the two horizontal projecting rooflines shown in this picture. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Phelia Grimwade House (1881–82) (Figure 1: Number 3)

Phelia Grimwade House is a large three-storey asymmetrical building with a central four-storey tower (Figure 14). It is constructed in red face brickwork with concrete render detailing and a slate roof. The house varies between two and three-storeys (excluding the tower) in different sections. The central tower rises above the height of the building and has a low-slung hipped roof.

The first floor features a loggia facing Anderson Street to the west, while an open verandah is still visible on the northern elevation of the ground floor. A relief of the school crest has been erected above the principal opening to the loggia. The front entry is adorned with a pair of doors originally from a Spanish monastery. An early, but likely not original, one-storey wing projects to the south on the primary façade. Windows on the ground and first floors have segmental arch heads, while the second floor and tower above have round headed arch windows.

The building has been significantly altered to the rear (east), with a large extension having been undertaken in 1930.



Figure 14. The principal elevation of Phelia Grimwade House, facing Anderson Street. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Phelia Grimwade House extension (1930) (Figure 1: Number 4)

The Phelia Grimwade House extension is a three-storey red brick building with basement floor. The building has a simple, hipped slate roof. As the site slopes downwards to the north, the basement floor of the building is most evident on the northern elevation.

The building has a simple rectilinear form. Its principal elevation facing northwards to Clowes Street. A tower at the northeast corner of the building is the foremost element of the façade. This tower has chamfered edges and a low-pitched, hipped slate roof topped with a finial. A decorative dentilled cornice in both red and brown brick is evident underneath the eaves of the tower's roof. Brown brick crosses are located on the chamfered edges of the tower at the second floor, while a decorative brown brick edging surrounds the tower windows. A relief of the school crest is placed below the second-floor tower window

on the northern elevation. A section of the northern façade projects slightly at the ground and first floors, which allows for a shallow balcony at the second floor. This balcony is enclosed by a brick balustrade inset with mild steel panels (Figure 16).



Figure 15. The principal elevation of the Phelia Grimwade House extension, facing north. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 16. Detail showing dark brown brick detailing and mild steel balcony balustrade. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

The remainder of the building has minimal detailing. A header course of brown coloured bricks wraps around the building at windowsill height on the ground floor. Two rendered bands extend around these elevations; one at the height of the ground floor windows, and another above the first-floor windows. Ground floor windows feature low arched heads and render surrounds, while the openings to the floors above have simple casement windows with transoms.

The east and west elevations of the building feature minimal detailing, with windows regularly spaced across each floor.



Figure 17. Phelia Grimwade House extension, side elevation facing east. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 18. Phelia Grimwade House extension, side elevation facing west. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Gilman Jones Hall (New Merton Hall, 1937) (Figure 1: Number 5)

Gilman Jones Hall is a three-storey red brick building, with terracotta tile clad roof. The principal elevation of the building faces northwards, to Clowes Street. The openings are predominantly set with simple, double hung windows.

The principal elevation has two projecting wings, both with gable ends. Set between these projecting wings at the first floor is a cantilevered, horizontally emphasised balcony with curved ends that projects slightly forward from the building. The balcony is enclosed by a solid brick balustrade, with a thick render band wrapping around the bottom. A render band extends around the building at the height of the ground floor windows, with another render band wrapping around the building at the height of first floor windows. Three windows are equally set on each floor on both of the projecting wings. Both gable ends are identical, and feature decorative brick capping and ornate, centrally set brick vents. Windows are regularly spaced across the elevations of the building in groups of ones, twos and threes.

The eastern elevation of the building features a projecting, flat-roofed wing. This wing features curved edges and continues the render band detailing. A further render band is evident above the second-floor windows on this wing. As opposed to the remainder of the building, the openings on this wing are large, square multi-pane windows.



Figure 19. Principal elevation of Gilman Jones Hall, facing north. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Former nursery (c1940) (Figure 1: Number 6)

The former nursery, likely dating to c1940, is a small and simply finished rectilinear building. The building is a single room and is clad in weatherboards with an iron-clad gable roof. The principal entry is on the southwest elevation, while the longer southeast elevation has extensive glazing which allows the room to be opened up to the nearby lawn. This building is greatly enhanced by its garden setting.



Figure 20. Former nursery. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Recent school buildings (Figure 1: Numbers 7–13)

Various purpose-built school buildings were constructed on the site from the 1970s. Key additions include the following.

Ross Hall and the Edith Mountain Centre (Figure 1: Number 7) built in the 1870–80s are located in the central portion of the site, just north of Merton Hall close to the Anderson Street boundary. Ross Hall (to the west) is a theatre, while the Edith Mountain Centre (to the east) accommodates classrooms. The architect for both buildings is currently unknown. Ross Hall has two built forms: a large rectilinear section set on a north–south axis that houses the stage and back of house areas, and the splayed auditorium section. The stage section is completed in ruled render, while the auditorium section has overlapping sections of red-brown face brick walls that accommodate tall, narrow east facing fenestrations. The Edith Mountain Centre is a four-storey rectangular building that is arranged on a north-south axis. Its southern extent abuts the Merton Hall building to the south. The western elevation of the building is completed in red-brown face bricks. The remaining elevations feature continuous bands of windows, set above concrete half walls.

Jessie Bage House (Figure 1: Number 8) is a two-storey brick and concrete former boarding house built in 1979, located near the northern boundary of the school. The architect for the building is unknown. As the land falls away towards the north of the site, the building is set lower than Phelia Grimwade House to the south. The building has an irregular stepped plan, with the northwest corner set at an angle. It has a shallow hipped roof clad in corrugated sheet material. It is structured around a series of red brick wing walls that extend beyond the roofline. Spanning between each wing wall are horizontal bands of brown aluminium framed windows with concrete spandrel panels below. The first-floor windows reach from half height to ceiling height, with taller windows to the ground floor. An open tread external stair with a pipe balustrade is located on the northwest corner of the building.

The Nina Crone Library (Figure 1: Number 9), built in 2006, is located in the central courtyard of the school. The building was originally constructed in 1987, however was substantially redeveloped in 2006

by Sally Draper Architects. The building is squarish in form, with a semi-circular projecting section to its south elevation. The building features a rooftop garden.

The Christine Briggs Building (Figure 1: *Number 10*) is a large, multi-storey structure located near the eastern boundary of the school. Built in 2004, the building is rectilinear in form, with face red bricks, aluminium windows, and metal panels. A rooftop terrace is provided above a projecting wing.

The Hub (Figure 1: *Number 11*) is a single-storey, rectilinear building constructed in the c2010s located on the northern boundary of the school, used as a sporting facility. As the land falls to the north of the site, the building is set lower than the nearby Gilman Jones Hall, and is largely obscured by the boundary wall at street level. The building has overhanging eaves to the north and east elevations. A pair of sunshades extend from the north elevation that are supported by large timber piers.

The Wildfell Centre (Figure 1: *Number 12*) is built in 2010 directly on the eastern boundary of the school abutting Walsh Street. Due to the fall of the land, the building is largely constructed below the level of the sporting fields. Wildfell Hall was designed by Sally Draper Architects and replaced an earlier residential building that had been acquired for use by the school. The building has articulated precast concrete panels with a motif drawn from the school crest on the elevation that faces Walsh Street. The northern façade features an abstract pattern brise-soleil.

The Artemis Centre (Figure 1: *Number 13*) is a large, multi-storey building built in 2014–17 located in the southwest corner of the site, facing Anderson Street. The building was designed by BVN Architecture. The building houses a swimming pool and other sporting facilities. The above ground portion of the building has undulating walls of glazing behind a continuous articulated aluminium screen.

Mature trees

The Melbourne Girls Grammar School site includes a number of mature trees of note, primarily located in the former gardens of Phelia Grimwade House, near the corner of Clowes Street and Anderson Street (Figure 21: Numbers 1–9). These trees contribute significantly to the streetscape and match the street trees on the opposite side of Anderson Street in both scale and effect.

In addition to this group of trees, other mature trees are located along the north and east site boundaries.



Legend

1	Red Ash (<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>)	6	English Elm (<i>Ulmus procera</i>)
2	Row of seven London Plane (<i>Platanus x acerifolius</i>)	7	Likely Monterey Cypress (<i>Cupressus sp.</i>)
3	Red-flowering Gum (<i>Corymbia ficifolia</i>)	8	Silky Oak (<i>Grevillea robusta</i>)
4	Monterey Cypress (<i>Cupressus macrocarpa</i>)	9	English Elm (<i>Ulmus procera</i>)
5	Kurrajong (<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>)		

Figure 21. Aerial photograph of the subject site showing the locations of mature trees. (Source: Nearmap 2022 with GML overlay)

INTEGRITY

The buildings at the Melbourne Girls' Girls Grammar School site at 62–108 Anderson Street South Yarra, generally exhibit a high degree of intactness to their original designs. Changes to buildings on the site in the course of the school's history have largely been made in order to support the continuing educational use, and are not regarded as detracting from the overall integrity of the site.

The original Merton Hall building (Figure 1: Number 1) has retained its original form and detailing to its principal façade, including the use of polychromatic brickwork, render, and shingle tiles. Openings appear to be original. The rear wing also retains much of its detailing, including terracotta tilework. The building has been altered for use, including the insertion of covered breezeways and a new extension to the southern elevation of the rear wing.

The Chapel of St Luke (Figure 1: Number 2) has remained largely intact to its original design. The building form remains mainly intact and retains its original materiality of red brick, terracotta, and copper. The 1967 division of the internal space has severely altered the legibility of the building's interior. While these changes diminish the legibility of the building as an assembly hall, they enhance the building's use as the school's place of worship. Further changes associated with the chapel, including the insertion of modern stained-glass glazing, further associate the building with the school community.

Phelia Grimwade House (Figure 1: Number 3) retains its original residential form. Principal design details including the use of red brick, render and slate all remain intact. The early ground floor extension to the south of the building continues these details and does not detract from the building. Window and door openings appear to be original. Extensive alterations to the rear of the building, including the 1930 extension (Figure 1: Number 4), do not diminish the building but rather provide evidence of its change in use as a school site. The 1930 extension maintains a high level of intactness, with its principal northern façade retaining its tower and decorative brickwork.

Gilman Jones Hall (Figure 1: Number 5) is also highly intact to its original design, retaining its horizontally emphasised balcony, decorative gable ends and curved eastern wing. The openings on the building appear to be original, including a decorative stained glass entry way. The small nursery building is also intact, retaining its form and large opening to the nearby lawn.

Some later buildings (added 1970s onwards) on the site do not negatively impact the integrity of the site. The discretely placed The Hub (Figure 1: Number 11) is set low enough below Gilman Jones Hall that it does not obstruct the view of the principal façade of that building. Other buildings, including the Nina Crone Library (Figure 1: Number 9), Christine Briggs Building (Figure 1: Number 10) and Wildfell Centre (Figure 1: Number 12), do not diminish the legibility of the site, as they are placed to the rear of the primary Anderson Street and Clowes Streets façades. The Artemis Building does not diminish the Anderson Street streetscape, as it is easily distinguishable and clearly separated from the earlier buildings. These later additions demonstrate the site's continuing use as a school.

Jessie Bage House (Figure 1: Number 8) was built within the original gardens of Phelia Grimwade House, and although set lower than Phelia Grimwade House due to the fall of the land, it partially diminishes the legibility of both that building and the 1930 extension. While Jessie Bage House is visually obtrusive when viewing Phelia Grimwade House from Clowes Street, views to Phelia Grimwade House are still afforded through the remaining garden at the corner of Clowes Street and Anderson Street.

Ross Hall and the Edith Mountain Centre (Figure 1: Number 7) diminish the streetscape on the Anderson Street boundary of the site. The stark wall of the Ross Centre is set significantly further forward than the Merton Hall and Phelia Grimwade House buildings either side of it, and its elevation fronting Anderson Street is contrasted against the brick materiality of those buildings.

Overall, the campus has medium to high integrity, with some early (pre-1970s) buildings displaying high levels of integrity.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The major Christian denominations had each aspired to a church-run 'grammar' school for boys, with Melbourne Grammar School and Wesley College being established in the study area, and Scotch College and St Patrick's College established in East Melbourne in the 1850s and 1860s. Although girls' education continued to fall significantly short of that provided for boys, some denominational girls' schools were established in the nineteenth century: the Academy of Mary Immaculate in Fitzroy (1857); Presbyterian Ladies College in East Melbourne (1875), and the Methodist Ladies College in Kew (1882). Many small non-denominational girls' schools opened in the fashionable suburbs of Melbourne, although most were not permanent institutions. Usually opened in private homes, these schools were characterised by their small student numbers and were often conducted by only one or two teachers, who typically owned the institution. Private education had become increasingly popular for girls in Melbourne by the late Victorian period, with many more schools for girls founded in the first years of the twentieth century. Boarding schools were often preferred, with schools like Oberwyl and Clyde in St Kilda being especially fashionable. Merton Hall was one of these schools. Few of these private ventures

would survive as independent schools around Melbourne, and some, like Merton Hall, would eventually be sold to churches to survive.

The following examples of private schools are comparable to the Melbourne Girls Grammar site, being of similar use, and demonstrating the way in which private schools have grown since their establishment. Examples are within the City of Melbourne unless otherwise noted.

Melbourne Grammar School, 321–369, 93–151 Domain Street, 2–124 Bromby Street, and 1–99 Domain Road Melbourne (VHR H0019; HO400)

Melbourne Grammar School is a private boys' school established by the Anglican Church and is one of the most prominent and long-established schools in Victoria. The school sits on a 15-acre site granted by the government in the 1850s, with a very fine and highly intact group of bluestone buildings designed by Webb and Taylor. The choice of a Tudor-Gothic style was intended to reflect the status of the institution and its modelling on earlier 'public schools' in England. The school has had successive waves of development, particularly since the postwar period.



Figure 22. Melbourne Grammar School, 321–369 St Kilda Road, 93–151 Domain Street, 2–124 Bromby Street and 1–99 Domain Road, Melbourne. (Source: Heritage Victoria 2008 via Hermes)

Wesley College, 567–581 St Kilda Road, Melbourne (assessed as individual heritage place as part of this Review)

Wesley College was founded by the Methodist Church as a private boys' school in 1866 and occupies land that had been granted by the government. The original Victorian building, designed by Charles Webb in 1864, was extensively remodelled by architect Harry Norris in the 1930s. Notable are the main building for its two splayed wings, and the school chapel facing Punt Road, built in 1935 and also designed by Norris.



Figure 23. Wesley College, 567–581 St Kilda Road, Melbourne. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Academy of Mary Immaculate, 88 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy (VHR H0507; HO184, City of Yarra)

The Academy of Mary Immaculate was founded as a Catholic girls' school in 1857. The school occupies a site on Nicholson Street along with the Convent of Mercy, which had traditionally been responsible for the school's administration. The convent and school were initially housed in buildings that already existed on the site; a collection of bluestone and sandstone wings were added between the 1850s and the 1880s.



Figure 24. Academy of Mary Immaculate, 88 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy. (Source: Heritage Victoria 2008 via Hermes)

Methodist Ladies College, 207 Barkers Road, Kew (HO204, City of Boroondara)

Methodist Ladies College was founded as a private girls' school in 1882 on a large land parcel in Kew. The main building of the school was constructed between 1881 and 1885. The school has commissioned many further buildings since, as well as having purchased nearby properties. The main building is a commanding two-storey Gothic Revival building with a turreted four-storey tower and cement render detailing.



Figure 25. Methodist Ladies College, 207 Barkers Road, Kew. (Source: Context 2016 via Hermes)

Genazzano FCJ College, 285–315 Cotham Road, Kew (VHR H1902; HO252, City of Boroondara)

Genazzano FCJ College is a Catholic girls' school that was established on the site in 1889, after the Sisters of the Faithful Companions of Jesus had been successful in operating a convent school, Vaucluse, in Richmond. The large complex of buildings is sited on a prominent hill in Kew. The main building is an imposing three-storey red brick structure designed by the prominent architect, William Wardell. The building has steeply pitched roofs, a tower, prominent gables, arched windows and a decorative flèche. A large steeple to the tower has since been removed. Extensions to the building were carried out in the postwar period, and the school has purchased nearby properties for use.



Figure 26. Genazzano FCJ College, 285–315 Cotham Road, Kew. (Source: Heritage Victoria 2008 via Hermes)

When compared to the above examples, the Melbourne Girls Grammar School is atypical within the City of Melbourne, as a private school that has been expanded in a piecemeal fashion. The school occupies

a small land parcel containing multiple buildings built in successive waves of development. Although primarily serving the same function as Melbourne Grammar School and Wesley College, these two sites are characterised by their extensive landholdings that resulted from Crown grants in the 1850s. Both schools' large land parcels lend the campuses more picturesque settings and have clearly influenced the placement and scale of buildings at both sites. Melbourne Grammar School and Wesley College present as extensive complexes of buildings spread across the sites, which are greatly enhanced by the large grounds they are set within.

The Academy of Mary Immaculate is similar to the subject site as it is contained within a small site. Melbourne Girls Grammar is distinguished from the Academy buildings in its preference for red face brick, instead of stone construction. Perhaps due to an alignment with the Catholic Church and its early origins as a convent, the Academy of Mary Immaculate's use of stone and Gothic-style elements lends the site the sense of a religious institution, rather than the more domestic character of the buildings at Melbourne Girls Grammar.

Although the Methodist Ladies College is a similar purpose-built girls' school, the original building presents as a far more imposing arrangement on the site, with complex gothic design and a prominent tower. The arrangement of the school reflects the large land parcel that the school was initially built on, and the less dense suburban context. The choice of gothic style buildings and concrete render further set this apart from the subject site. The Genazzano FCJ College site is highly comparable to Melbourne Girls Grammar, due to its use of red brick and vertically emphasised main building. The site is distinguished from Melbourne Girls Grammar, though, by its extensive land parcel, imposing size and preference for Gothic-style detailing. Like Melbourne Girls Grammar, both of these schools have built additional buildings, and purchased nearby houses for adaption.

Overall, Melbourne Girls Grammar School compares well with the above examples as an important example of a long-established girls' school in South Yarra. The school is characterised by its fine collection of architect-designed buildings enhanced by its garden setting and its consistent use of red brick across the site, which differs from many private school sites that rely on stone or concrete render and traditional Gothic-style influences.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

CRITERION A

- ✓ Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
-

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to understanding our cultural or natural history (research potential).

CRITERION D

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

CRITERION E

- ✓ Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).
-

CRITERION F

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

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).
-

CRITERION H

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of part of 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

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

Melbourne Planning Scheme

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	No
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	Yes – Collection of mature trees across the site
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01–4)	Yes – Fencing and retaining walls built of red brick, sandstone and bluestone, and wrought iron
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

Other

N/A

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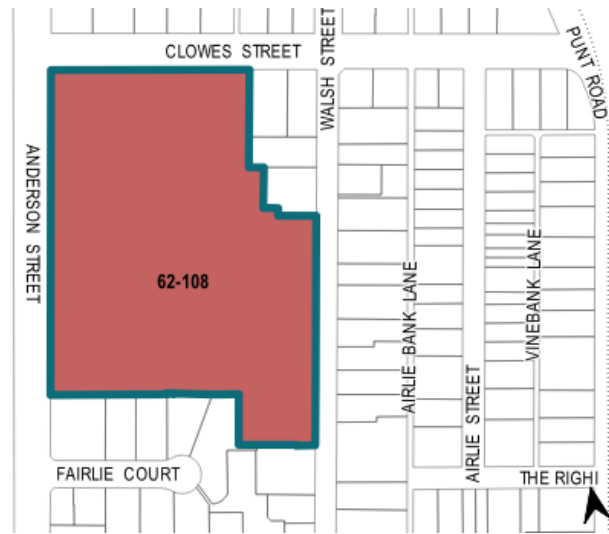
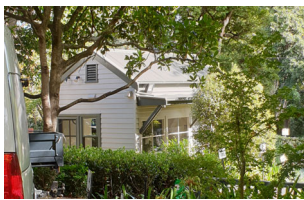
PREVIOUS STUDIES

South Yarra Conservation Study 1985 A; C

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Melbourne
Girls Grammar School

PS ref no: ~~HOxxx~~ [HO1401](#)



What is significant?

Melbourne Girls Grammar School at part of 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra, developed from 1881 onwards, is significant.

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

- form, materiality and detailing of the Merton Hall building with rear wing (Figure 1: Number 1)
- form, materiality and detailing of the Chapel of St Luke building (Figure 1: Number 2)
- form, materiality and detailing of Phelia Grimwade House (Figure 1: Number 3)
- form, materiality and detailing of the 1930 Phelia Grimwade House extension (Figure 1: Number 4)
- form, materiality and detailing of Gilman Jones Hall (Figure 1: Number 5)
- form, materiality and detailing of the former nursery building (Figure 1: Number 6)
- fencing and retaining walls around much of the site, built in a combination of red brick, sandstone and bluestone
- early wrought iron gates
- school's garden setting, particularly in the northwest corner of the site surrounding Phelia Grimwade House
- mature collection of trees including evergreen and deciduous exotic and Australian native specimens (established by c1945) within the gardens along Clowes Street and Anderson Street (Figure 2: Numbers 1–12)
- school's continuous use of red and polychromatic brickwork, terracotta and render across the site
- school's siting within its domestic streetscape, opposite the Royal Botanic Gardens.

More recent alterations and additions (Figure 1: Number 7–13), are not significant. The two c1930s residences fronting Walsh Street (Figure 1: Number 14) are not significant to the subject site.



Legend

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 Merton Hall (1900) and rear extension (1919, after 1938)</p> <p>2 Chapel of St Luke (former Assembly Hall) (1917)</p> <p>3 Phelia Grimwade House (former Yarra House) (1881–82)</p> <p>4 Phelia Grimwade House extension (1930)</p> <p>5 Gilman Jones Hall (1937)</p> <p>6 Former Nursery (c1940)</p> <p>7 Ross Hall and Edith Mountain Centre (c1970–80s)</p> | <p>8 Jessie Bage House (1979)</p> <p>9 Nina Crone Library (1987, 2006)</p> <p>10 Christine Briggs Building (2004)</p> <p>11 Hub (c2010s)</p> <p>12 Wildfell Centre (2010)</p> <p>13 Artemis Centre (2014–17)</p> <p>14 Two c1930s residences known as 281 and 285 Walsh Street (incorporated as part of the complex in the late twentieth century)</p> |
|--|---|

Figure 1. Aerial photograph of 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra (dashed outline), showing the key elements that contribute to the significance (Numbers 1–6). Purpose-built school buildings shaded in pink (Numbers 7–13) and Number 14 are late twentieth century additions to the complex that are not significant. (Source: Nearmap 2022 with GML overlay)



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Red Ash (<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i>) | 6 | English Elm (<i>Ulmus procera</i>) |
| 2 | Row of seven London Plane (<i>Platanus x acerifolius</i>) | 7 | Likely Monterey Cypress (<i>Cupressus sp.</i>) |
| 3 | Red-flowering Gum (<i>Corymbia ficifolia</i>) | 8 | Silky Oak (<i>Grevillea robusta</i>) |
| 4 | Monterey Cypress (<i>Cupressus macrocarpa</i>) | 9 | English Elm (<i>Ulmus procera</i>) |
| 5 | Kurrajong (<i>Brachychiton populneus</i>) | | |

Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the subject site with mature trees that contribute to the significance. (Source: Nearmap 2022 with GML overlay)

How is it significant?

Melbourne Girls Grammar School at part of 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra, developed from 1881 onwards, is of local historical, aesthetic and social significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

Melbourne Girls Grammar School at part of 62–108 Anderson Street, South Yarra, is of local historical significance as a long-established girls school in South Yarra. The secondary education of girls in the nineteenth century had been provided by private tutors and by small private schools, which often operated in the homes of their owners. Originally opened as Merton Hall, Melbourne Girls Grammar School began as one of these schools in 1893. Merton Hall gained such popularity, likely due to the quality of teaching provided by its original Cambridge-educated proprietors, that it commissioned a large

purpose-built schoolhouse. The large student numbers and fine campus would have cemented the school's prominence. (Criterion A)

The school is of historical significance as the first girls' school in Victoria that was officially affiliated with the Anglican Church. Despite other Christian denominations gradually providing for girls' education in the nineteenth century, the Anglican Church did not provide such measures, and Anglican families instead relied upon small girls' schools whose owners had Anglican leanings. Due to connections between the school's second owner and the Anglican Church, the school was eventually granted permission to use the name of Melbourne Church of England Girls Grammar School, and was shortly afterwards acquired by the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church has since opened further girls' schools in Victoria, and is a major provider of private education in Victoria. (Criterion A)

Melbourne Girls Grammar School is of aesthetic significance for its fine collection of architect-designed buildings, enhanced by its garden setting and location opposite the Botanic Gardens. The site is characterised by its continuous use of red brick buildings, enlivened by render, polychromatic brickwork, terracotta, and tiled roofs. The Merton Hall building, designed by Percy Oakden, is a finely designed building, with ornate brickwork and intact original detailing. The former assembly hall features highly refined use of terracotta Art Nouveau decorative detailing. Phelia Grimwade House is a highly refined example of an asymmetrical, early 1880s house, that is greatly enhanced by its remnant garden setting including mature trees (evergreen and deciduous exotic and Australian native specimens) established by c1945. Further additions, including the Phelia Grimwade House extension and Gilman Jones Hall, exhibit fine detailing and conscious integration with existing buildings. (Criterion E)

Melbourne Girls Grammar School is socially significant to the City of Melbourne, having been continually used as a place of education for over 160 years. It is especially significant to the community of women who have been educated there, and those who have been associated with the school, such as teachers, benefactors and administrators. The school community's connection with the site is especially evident in the Chapel of St Luke, where the Old Collegians' Association has been responsible for the donation of multiple stained glass memorial windows. The Chapel continues to be used by members of the community as their principal place of worship, and for major life events such as weddings and funerals. (Criterion G)

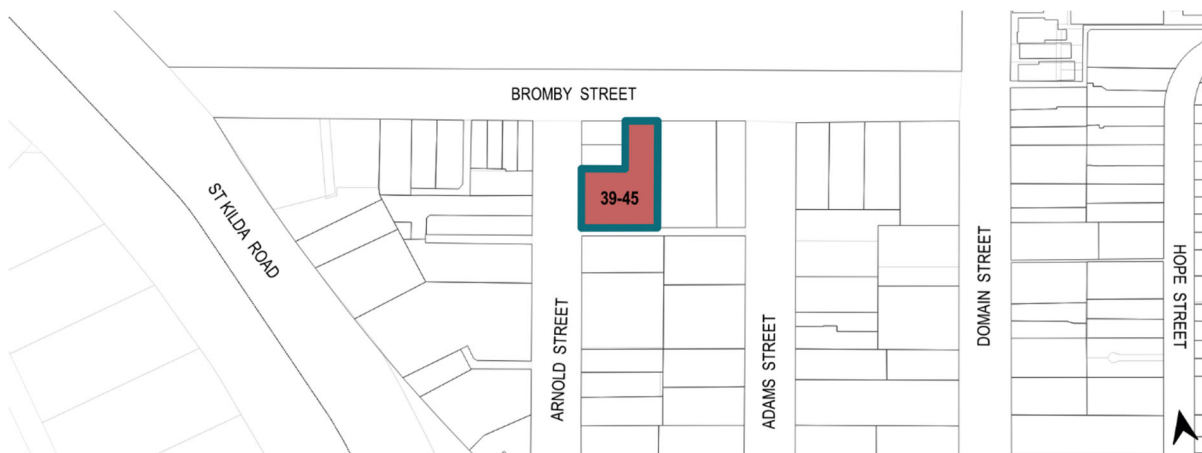
Primary source

South Yarra Heritage Review 2022 [\(updated March 2024\)](#) (GML Heritage)

SITE NAME: St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church (Chapel of Ease)

STREET ADDRESS: 39–45 Bromby Street, South Yarra

PROPERTY ID: 101282



SURVEY DATE:	January 2021	SURVEY BY:	GML Heritage
PLACE TYPE:	Individual Heritage Place	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY:	HO6 South Yarra Precinct
PROPOSED CATEGORY:	Significant	FORMER GRADE:	B
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Kempson and Conolly (1915) Thomas G Payne (1954)	BUILDER:	FG Farr (1954)
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945–1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1915, 1954

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES:	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES:
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not identify any clear or direct associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	N/A
HISTORICAL THEMES:	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES:
9 Religion and spirituality	9.2 Establishing places of worship

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 39–45 Bromby Street, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map.

SUMMARY

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church at 39–45 Bromby Street, South Yarra, was built as a chapel of ease for the parish of St Joseph’s Parish, South Yarra, in 1915. Architects Kempson and Conolly designed the small church in the Gothic Revival style. In 1954 the church was remodelled to the design of Thomas G Payne. The 1954 remodelling of the building displays elements of the Baroque style, which is demonstrated in the ornate parapeted façade. This remodelling of the façade in a historical revival style was an unusual departure from the more typical Modernist-style churches that were being constructed in suburban Victoria in the postwar era. The building has been continuously used as a Catholic church for 100 years.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Church halls and chapels

Ancillary church buildings belonging to the major Christian denominations—including mission churches, chapels of ease and mission halls—were common in the City of Melbourne, including South Yarra, from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. They were built to supplement the functions of parish churches by broadening the geographic reach of the parish. Chapels of ease were often built for the convenience of those that lived some distance from the parish church; they were also intended to provide an additional place of worship, thereby reducing the occurrence of overcrowding of the parish church on Sundays. Mission halls had a range of uses; some were used for Sunday services but were also used for education and meetings. These supplementary places of worship were often provided specifically for the working class, including local domestic servants (*Telegraph*, 27 August 1887:6). A mission hall or chapel of ease was typically smaller and plainer than the main church and was often located on quieter residential streets rather than on main roads and prominent corners. The modest character of these buildings reflects both their ancillary role to the main church, as well as the stratification of class in religious congregations.

Mission chapels and mission halls—sometimes referred to as churches of ‘low tendencies’—were intended to provide a welcoming and non-intimidating space for the poor and non-believers. The purpose of mission chapels and mission halls was to attract new members to the church. Mission workers went out into the community and zealously sought to convert people to Christianity. The mission chapels and halls provided ‘bright, simple and attractive’ services that were more informal and accessible than services typical of the main churches (*Telegraph*, 27 August 1887:6). They often provided comfort and solace to the poor. Single-room Sunday schools were sometimes built alongside small chapels and mission halls. Mission chapels and halls flourished in Melbourne in the late nineteenth century in areas where there was a large working-class population. The activities of mission chapels and halls declined following World War II on account of greater social mobility and the gentrification of the former working-class pockets of South Yarra.

Chapels of ease, as their name implied, provided a place of worship that was easier to access than the parish church and these were established in large parishes where there was a large section of the population that was at a considerable distance from the church. St Joseph’s Catholic Church in South Yarra (City of Stonnington) established the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church chapel of ease on Bromby Street, South Yarra and another in Toorak (demolished).

SITE HISTORY

The place occupies the traditional Country of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people. The land comprising the subject site originally formed part of Crown Allotments 1 and 2 in the Parish of Melbourne North, first purchased by A Watson in 1864 (City of Melbourne, 1922).

Bromby Street first appears in the postal directory in 1867 (S&Mc 1866, 1867). In 1868 the land was subdivided and two small single detached dwellings were built, each measuring 44 x 140 feet and fronting Bromby Street (Gould 1985). By 1896, the subject site comprised three parcels of land, each with a residential structure (MMBW Detail Plan no 896, 1896). They were addressed 41 and 43 Bromby Street and 48 Arnold Street. The residences were occupied by tenants until 1914 (S&Mc 1914).

In 1912–13 the Catholic Church purchased the subject land for £1275 (Gould datasheet 1985; *Advocate*, 13 February 1915:16). The Church planned to establish a chapel of ease for the convenience of those living some distance from St Joseph’s parish church in South Yarra (Parish of South Yarra 2012). The parish church, built c1888, is located at 30 Fitzgerald Street, South Yarra, in the City of

Stonnington. The geographical bounds of the Parish of South Yarra were broad; it extended from Chapel Street in the east to St Kilda Road in the west, and originally included parts of Toorak (Akehurst 2019:12). Many parishioners had difficulty attending Mass regularly because of the distance involved. South Yarra was proclaimed a parish with an irremovable rector in 1906 (Parish of South Yarra 2012:12). In response to several petitions, instigated by local domestic servants, a chapel of ease was built and opened in Toorak in 1912 (later part of the new Parish of Armadale/Toorak). This chapel was often overcrowded at Sunday Mass, and a second chapel was required (Parish of South Yarra 2012:12). The Toorak chapel of ease was demolished in 1922 (Parish of South Yarra 2012:12).

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, South Yarra, was built for the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation in 1915 (Gould datasheet 1985). It was designed by architects Kempson and Conolly and built by FG Farr (Gould 1985; *Advocate*, 13 February 1915:16). An early photograph shows that it comprised a single building with a narrow rectangular plan form (Figure 1). It was built of red brick with what appears to be cement render detailing above openings and on the buttress coping (Figure 2). Archbishop Thomas Carr blessed the building at its opening on 21 February 1915 (*Advocate*, 27 February 1915:16).

The construction of the building—including internal seating, altar requisites, fittings, asphalt paths and fencing—cost £2000 (*Advocate*, 13 February 1915:16; *Advocate*, 27 February 1915:16). The expenditure was considered significant at the time and the cost was met by the Catholic Church with contributions from parishioners (*Advocate*, 13 February 1915:16).



Figure 1. Detail from aerial photograph of St Kilda Road, c.1950–54, by Charles Pratt, showing the original Victorian-era façade of the subject building. (Source: Charles D Pratt between 1950 and 1954, State Library Victoria: John Etkins Collection, Accession No: H2016.33/61)



Figure 2. Principal façade of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church before modifications, not dated [c.1940s]. (Source: *Age*, 17 July 1954:17)

South Yarra's demographic historically had a low proportion of Catholics and a high proportion of Anglicans (Colman 1972:3). The 1966 census revealed that only 16 per cent of residents identified as Catholic, in contrast to the 42 per cent who identified as Anglican (Colman 1972:3). The need for a chapel of ease in the Parish of South Yarra reflects the characteristics of the parish's congregation at the time—small but growing, and spread across a wide area. The subject building is said to have been

colloquially known as the ‘servants’ church’, owing to the fact that its congregation was made up of mainly (Irish) domestic servants from the large houses of St Kilda and South Yarra (Akehurst 2019:12).

In the late 1930s the church acquired a collection of decoratively carved timber elements. A near life-size crucifix (c1937) sculpted from Queensland beechwood by ecclesiastical woodcarver and sculptor Walter Langcake was installed over the altar (Akehurst 2019:12). In addition, the interior has a timber panelled reredos that features carved representations of the Eucharist, saints and other motifs, as well as a timber altar with an inset carved panel of the Last Supper. These two elements also date from the 1930s and are presumed to be the work of Langcake (Akehurst 2019:12). The church also acquired a wooden statue of St Thomas Aquinas, gifted by a parishioner (date unknown), that is believed to originate from eighteenth-century Spain (Akehurst 2019:12; Clipr arcade 2020). Italian-born and Austrian-trained sculptor Leopoldine Mimovich OAM (1920–2019) carved the Stations of the Cross and the statues of Our Lady and the Sacred Heart of Jesus that are displayed on either side of the sanctuary arch (Akehurst 2019:15). The creation date of the sculptures by Mimovich is not known.



Figure 3. Wood carver Walter Langcake in 1937 working on the near life-sized figure of Christ in Queensland beechwood that surmounts the reredos of the altar in St Thomas Aquinas Church. (Source: Michelle Stillman 1937, Wikimedia Commons)

Minor alterations and additions were carried out to the building in 1939 (MBAI).

Although the church was a modest size, it hosted some high-profile events, including the funeral of well-known Australian poet CJ Dennis, in 1938 (*Argus*, 23 June 1938:2). In 1939 the Vienna Mozart Boys Choir performed at the church. The choir was touring Australia when the war broke out in September 1939, leaving them unable to return to Austria (Clipr arcade 2020; *Mercury*, 13 October 1939:2). During their stay they attended school at the Christian Brothers College, East Melbourne (Clipr arcade 2020; *Mercury*, 13 October 1939:2).

The church was remodelled in 1954 to the design of Thomas G Payne at a cost of £20,000 (*Advocate*, 7 October 1954:7; Parish of South Yarra 2012:12; Butler 2017:58). The cost of the remodelling was mostly defrayed by a bequest from Teresa Mayer, whose husband was Gustav Mayer, former Austrian Consul

to Australia (*Advocate*, 7 October 1954:7; *Herald*, 1 August 1914:14). It is thought that Mayer made the bequest as a gesture of appreciation to the church for the hospitality it showed to the Vienna Mozart Boys Choir during the war (Clipr arcade 2020). Archbishop Daniel Mannix, accompanied by Reverend Alan Fox, performed the blessing of the new additions at the church's reopening on 30 September 1954 (*Advocate*, 7 October 1954:7).

The modification works entailed building an addition to the front section; erecting a new sanctuary; rendering the external face brick surfaces (that were originally white); and constructing an elaborate new façade—fronting Bromby Street—in the Baroque style (*Advocate*, 7 October 1954:7). The remodelled façade was built 8 feet in front of the original façade, bringing it forward to abut the northernmost edge of the allotment so the church opens directly onto the street (*Age*, 17 July 1954:17). Inside, the original façade wall has been altered and is now the southern internal wall of the narthex. The original façade wall retains the foundation stone laid by Archbishop Carr. The ceramic tiles embedded on the Bromby Street façade were fired locally at the South Yarra brickworks, formerly located on the corner of Chapel Street and Toorak Road. The stained-glass window fronting Bromby Street was produced by Brooks Robinson (Clipr arcade 2020; *Age*, 17 July 1954:17). The interior was updated with a pink and blue colour scheme, but its original 1915 layout and many of its components, including the open timber roof trusses and altar, were not altered during the modification works. It was noted that the colour scheme after the remodelling was 'very bright' (*Age*, 17 July 1954:17).



Figure 4. Image showing the new façade of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, South Yarra. Note that the doors were originally polychromatic. They have since been overpainted in a single colour. (Source: *Age*, 17 July 1954:17)

The Baroque-inspired design of the new façade was an unusual and dramatic departure from the Modernist approaches to ecclesiastical architecture that were becoming increasingly popular in postwar Melbourne (*Herald*, 23 November 1954:16), notably in the Catholic Church. Payne's interpretation of the

Baroque style, characterised by its dramatic forms, ornament and application of symbolic motifs, was seen by contemporary commentators as representing an anachronistic counterpoint to developments in Modernist religious architecture. In an increasingly secular society, representation, tradition and symbolism were seen as disrupting the trajectory of Modernism (Goad and Daunt 2019). The remodelling of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church received attention within Melbourne's architectural circles. The architect and critic Robin Boyd published an article entitled 'Church builders are in a dilemma' in response to Payne's remodelling of the church (*Herald*, 23 November 1954:16). In this, he describes the remodelled St Thomas Aquinas as an 'Australian Rules Baroque' and critiques the application of a traditional style, not historically found in Australia, to a postwar religious building.

Another review of the newly remodelled church describes it as a 'dazzling modern building' (*Age*, 17 July 1954:17). Its unique composition has been described variously as German Baroque, Spanish Baroque, South American Baroque, and even late Renaissance (Butler 2017:58; Akehurst 2019:15; *Age*, 17 July 1954:17).

Few changes have been made to the exterior of the building since its postwar alterations and redevelopment. A steel fence was installed along the western boundary line in 1974, and in 2017 the interior was restored (MBAI; Akehurst 2019:15).

Since 1975 St Thomas Aquinas has been administered by the Augustinian Order (Akehurst 2019:15) and continues to function as a place of worship for the parishioners of South Yarra.

William Patrick Conolly, architect

The architect WP Conolly, of the practice Kempson and Conolly, designed many Catholic churches in Melbourne during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Conolly was responsible for the organ gallery at St Mary's, Kyneton (1892), St Joseph's Catholic Church in Benalla (1907–08) and the Cussen Memorial at Boroondara Cemetery (1912–13). While in sole practice, Conolly was responsible for the completion of Sacred Heart Church, St Kilda (1922); the third church of St John the Evangelist Catholic Church, East Melbourne (1930); and St Dominic's Catholic Church, Camberwell (c1936). In partnership with Gerald Vanheems, Conolly was responsible for the completion of St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne (three spires and west porch remodelling) in 1936–40 (*Advocate*, 2 November 1939:21). Conolly designed buildings in revival styles well into the twentieth century, reflecting a conservative approach to religious architecture. He based his design for the Carmelite Monastery in Kew (1928) on French medieval architecture (*Herald*, 27 June 1928:13).

In conjunction with the firm of Payne & Dale, Conolly designed the chapel at Newman College, the University of Melbourne (*Age*, 16 November 1938:6). Conolly designed St Dominic's Catholic Church in Camberwell (built in 1936).

In 1912 Kempson and Conolly designed the extension to St Joseph's Catholic Church, South Yarra. These works consisted of the addition of transepts, a chancel and two sacristies (*Advocate*, 21 December 1912:33).

Thomas G Payne, architect

Thomas G Payne (1906–1983) was a Melbourne born architect and the son of architect T A Payne. He ran the practice of Payne & Dale for a very short time in the 1930s, then continued in sole practice until the 1960s. (Coleman et al 1996:58).

Payne designed several buildings for the Catholic Church in Melbourne, employing a diverse range of architectural styles. Those still extant include the Spanish Gothic-styled St Monica's Church, Moonee Ponds (1934); the Neo-Romanesque St Therese's Church, Essendon; and the English Gothic-styled

Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Newman College, University of Melbourne (designed in collaboration with Connolly, 1936–42). He also worked on hybrid additions and modifications to Catholic churches, including designing the Functionalist schoolroom addition (1948) to St Mary's Church, Hampton—designed in the Mannerist style by HS Harris (1923)—and remodelling St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, South Yarra, in 1954. His design for St Paschal's friary complex in Box Hill (1936) mixes elements of a range of architectural styles, including Georgian Revival, Byzantine, and Arts and Crafts. This example demonstrates Payne's tendency to combine elements from a range of traditional and modern styles. In 1959 he designed a substantial extension to St Dominic's Catholic Church in Camberwell (built in 1936 to the design of WP Conolly).

He supervised the erection of the spires at St Patrick's Cathedral after the death of Gerald Vanheems (*Advocate*, 29 May 1946:9). Payne was a practising Catholic and a notable ecclesiastical architect. As a practising Catholic, Payne was highly familiar with the internal functions and processes of the church. This experience likely contributed to his development as a notable ecclesiastical architect.

Walter (Wally) Langcake, woodcarver and sculptor

Walter (Wally) Langcake (1889–1967) was a Victorian woodcarver and sculptor who specialised in ecclesiastical decorative arts. He was born in Warragul, Victoria, in 1889. Langcake was one of the foremost wood carvers of T McCarthy & Company, furniture manufacturers, whose firm worked for ecclesiastical architect Louis R Williams for over 50 years (Moore 2001:31). Langcake's carvings are represented in many Williams's churches and chapels in Victoria and various other states. His work in Victoria includes carvings or woodworks in Holy Trinity, Hastings (c1924, 1932–33); St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne (1928); All Saints', Preston (1930); St Silas's, Albert Park (1931); Hawthorn Town Hall (1932); All Saints', Bendigo (1945); Geelong Grammar School chapel (1950); All Saints', Kooyong (1950); St John's, Toorak (1951); and St John's, Camberwell (1957) (Moore 2001:31). Working to Williams's design, Langcake also executed about 40 coats of arms of Australian towns and names and mottoes of ships (Moore 2001:91). Some of his best known works include the coat of arms on the gates of the Royal Melbourne Mint in William Street; the 'Pelican in Her Piety', timber panel bas relief, St. John's Anglican Church, Camberwell; the bronze wreath at the base of Australian American War Memorial, Canberra; and the entrance sign at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Langcake died in 1967.

Leopoldine (Poldi) Mimovich, artist

Leopoldine (Poldi) Mimovich (1920–2019) was born in 1920 in south Tyrol, Italy. Two years after her birth, the family moved to the small village of St Johann in Austria. At the age of 14, she was apprenticed to her father, Franz Deflorian, an interior decorator. Mimovich continued on to study under leading artists in Austria. She briefly studied at the College of Religious Art in Hallstadt before it was closed by the Nazis during World War II.

In 1947 she graduated as a qualified teacher with a Diploma of Art. She married Ljubisa Mimovich in 1948 and the couple migrated to Australia that year. They settled at Bonegilla and Royal Park migrant hostels before finding independent accommodation in Yarraville and, later, Kew, where Mimovich established her studio. Mimovich's work is found in parks, homes, churches, schools and convents throughout Australia. Her crucifixes hang in the United Nations building in New York. She died in 2019. (National Liturgical Architecture and Art Council 2020)

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, South Yarra, has been continuously used as a place of worship since 1915, serving the Catholic congregation on site for over 105 years. The congregation of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church forms a specific community who, over generations, have used and visited the place regularly and has they have since its establishment. For this subsection of the community the Church has been a place of worship, and used for family gatherings and important occasions such as christenings, weddings and funerals. The congregation of St Thomas Aquinas St Thomas Aquinas Church is a publicly accessible building in which a community function (religious worship) is provided. This function is clearly identifiable in the external fabric of the building, evident in the crucifixes and Christogram tiles. St Thomas Aquinas Church is identified as having social significance on the basis that it provides a setting for a defined community to gather and participate in a cultural practice.

SITE DESCRIPTION

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church (chapel of ease) at 39–45 Bromby Street, South Yarra, is a modest-size church. The original main hall, constructed in 1915, is in the Gothic Revival style. The principal façade, constructed in 1954, is in the Baroque style. The subject site is located on a block bound by Bromby Street to the north and Arnold Street to the west. The church is built on an L-shaped allotment comprising two parcels with frontages to Bromby and Arnold streets.



Figure 5. 39–45 Bromby Street, outlined in light yellow. (Source: Nearmap 2021 with GML overlay)

Exterior of the building

The building has a narrow L-shaped plan form that comprises three sections: the main hall fronting Bromby Street, the chancel area, and a sacristy area to the west of the chancel (fronting Arnold Street). It is constructed of brick and has a slate clad gabled roof.

The Bromby Street façade has an elaborate roofline, comprising a multicurved gable parapet with an exaggerated cornice. At the centre is a cement tablet with scrolled brackets and a metal crucifix mounted atop. The façade has a protruding central bay and a strong vertical emphasis accentuated by the height of the parapet and crucifix. Recessed to either side of the central bay are two lower parapeted walls. Curvilinear extensions of the parapet bridge the height difference between these lower walls and the higher central bay. The lower section of the 1915 façade, with its simpler gable form, is visible behind the 1954 façade. It extends on either side of the central bay and above the parapeted walls, becoming a recessed layer of the overall composition.

A large, multicurved window with moulded surrounds is centred above the entrance containing a crucifix design in stained glass. The parapets of the lower side walls have coping and are bracketed on each end with a corniced pilaster and geometric urn-like element. The surface of the central bay has a grooved diaper cross pattern set into the render with inset enamelled tiles at the crossings. Some of the enamel tiles feature the Christogram symbol. The central entrance door has a broken pediment above and original lanterns fixed on either side. Two side doors occupy the lower flanking sections of the façade. These have moulded surrounds with a simple scroll and depressed arch design at the top.

On the western elevation, facing Arnold Street, much of the 1915 design is intact and visible. The side elevations are divided by seven buttresses (Figure 6). There is a narrow string cornice that runs horizontally across the façade. Arched stained glass windows with hood moulds are spaced evenly between the buttresses. The window fourth from the north is shorter and has tracery dividing the glazing into four panes. Underneath this window is a door opening. The eastern elevation appears to have an identical design but is concealed from street view.

A small chancel connects to the main wing at the rear. It contains the sanctuary that appears to date from the 1954 additions. It is separated from the main form by a pronounced parapeted gable end with thick coping and a moulded cement crucifix at the apex. The roof line of the chancel is lower and is hipped to accommodate the octagonal bay window at the rear.

The third built form (1954) fronts Arnold Street and features an eaveless gable end finished with simple moulding and corniced brackets (Figure 7). It has a central bay containing an arched window with protruding cement sill. The bay finishes short of the gable roofline and is accentuated by thick coping configured in a curved scroll design at the top. On the northern elevation there are two windows and a door opening.



Figure 6. Western elevation of the principal wing. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 7. 1954 addition with chancel visible at the rear of the main hall. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

At the intersection of the main hall and the third built form is a small extension. It has a flat corrugated metal roof, a door with raised cement surrounds featuring a simple scroll motif, and two small rectangular windows facing west with projecting sills.

The allotment fronting Arnold Street has a lawn garden to the west of the built form which extends to the south behind the building. The garden has a wide concrete path and shrubs and two mature trees. A crimped wire fence with matching gates runs along the allotment boundary on the west and south.

Interior of the building

The internal layout of the main hall is rectangular with a linear and mostly open plan. It comprises a narthex, entered from Bromby Street, that opens into the nave, continuing to the altar area and chancel. Two narrow aisles run alongside the outer sides of the nave, providing access to the eastern and western door openings. It has an open queen post truss ceiling with curved supporting brackets. The wall surfaces are stuccoed and the floor carpeted. Above the windows are thick hood moulds. Moulded cement brackets support the ceiling wall joints.

The church contains a collection of timber sculptural works. These include the near-life-size crucifix sculpture by Walter Langcake; the statue of St Thomas Aquinas, believed to be of Spanish origin and dating from the eighteenth century; and the Stations of the Cross carvings and statues of Our Lady and the Sacred Heart of Jesus by artist Leopoldine Mimovich.

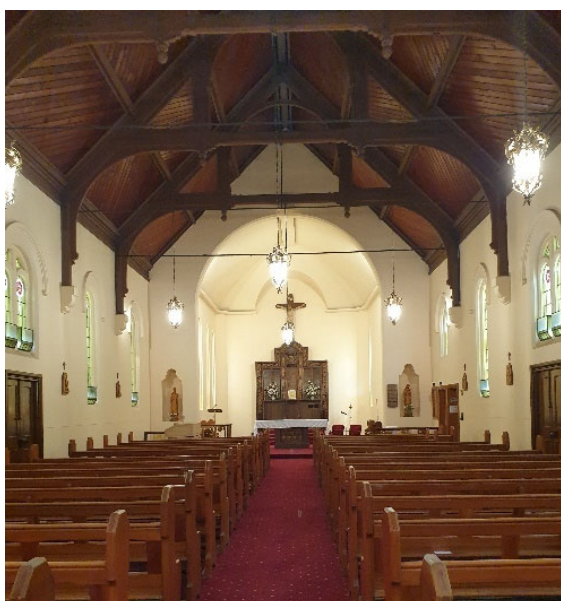


Figure 8. Interior hall of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, South Yarra. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Figure 9. Detail of the altar and crucifix. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

INTEGRITY

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church (chapel of ease) at 39–45 Bromby Street, South Yarra, is intact to its construction in 1915 (the form and interior of the main hall) and its 1954 remodelling (façade, additions and external rendered walls) with very few changes visible. The building retains the original built form of the 1915 hall and fenestration on its side elevations. The 1954 modifications are highly intact, including the additions to the western and southern elevations, the Baroque-style northern façade with curvilinear parapet, cornices and coping, broken pediment, grooved diaper cross pattern, and enamelled tiles. Internally, the queen post truss ceiling, hood moulds, brackets and timber carpentry are intact. The church retains several timber carvings and sculptures by notable artists. The interior colour scheme has been changed from its 1954 scheme of blue and pink.

Overall, the building retains a very high level of integrity in fabric, form and detail.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church is rare within the City of Melbourne as an example of the Baroque style and as a Federation-era Catholic church remodelled in the postwar period.

Baroque-style architecture is relatively rare within the City of Melbourne, and in Victoria more broadly. Some examples of the style can be found in the commercial buildings in the City of Melbourne and in some residential buildings in Melbourne’s older suburbs. The best-known examples in Melbourne are Flinders Street Station and the Melbourne City Baths, both examples of the Edwardian Baroque variant. Only one church in the Baroque Revival style has been identified in the City of Melbourne: the former Church of the Sacred Heart, built in 1897–99, 199 Rathdowne Street, Carlton (HO107, H0016). No other postwar churches with Baroque styling or features have been identified within the Heritage Overlay to Victorian Planning Schemes.

The majority of Catholic churches within the City of Melbourne were built in the Victorian era and are generally designed in the Gothic Revival style. Examples include St Francis’ Church, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne (HO714, H0013); St Augustine’s Church, Bourke Street, Melbourne (HO501); St Patrick’s Cathedral, East Melbourne (HO129, H0008); and St Mary Star of the Sea, West Melbourne (HO979, H2182).

Because of the unique stylistic qualities of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, comparative examples have been drawn from within and outside the City of Melbourne, as well as examples that have an earlier construction date. Examples are within the City of Melbourne unless otherwise noted.

The comparisons below demonstrate the extent to which St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church is a rare example of the Baroque style applied to a postwar church. Included in the comparative analysis are other designs for religious buildings by the architect Thomas G Payne.

Churches designed by Thomas G Payne

The Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Newman College, 871–945 Swanston Street, Parkville (VHR H0021; HO344)

The Chapel of the Holy Spirit, an addition to Newman College at the University of Melbourne, was commenced in 1939 and completed in 1942. Designed by architects Conolly, Dale and Payne, the chapel is in the Decorated Gothic style. Two further wings were added to Newman College in the following decades. They were both designed by Thomas G Payne and opened in 1958 and 1961 respectively (CoMMaps).



Figure 10. The Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Newman College, 871–945 Swanston Street, Parkville, built in 1942, 1958, 1961. (Source: CoMMaps)

St Dominic's Catholic Church, 816 Riversdale Road, Camberwell (Significant in City of Boroondara HO228 Holyrood Estate and Environs, Camberwell)

The façade and tower are part of Thomas G Payne's 1959 second-storey extension to the original Gothic Revival style church built in 1937 to a design by architect WP Conolly. Payne's addition, constructed of bluestone with sandstone detailing, incorporates a central belltower to the principal façade. The vertical proportions of the tower are emphasised by four sandstone spires on each corner. Notable features include the stylised stone tracery extending outside the window frame and above the parapet and decorative bas-relief entrance surrounds. The influence of Baroque architecture is demonstrated in the use of ornamental stone and heightened proportions.



Figure 11. St Dominic's Catholic Church, 816 Riversdale Road, Camberwell, built in 1937 and 1959. (Source: Nearmap 2021)

Baroque style churches

Rosina, Abbotsford Convent, 1 St Heliers St, Abbotsford (VHR H0951; City of Yarra HO9)

The Rosina building at the Abbotsford Convent comprises a central double-storey wing with two single-storey pavilions at the rear, enclosing a central courtyard. The brick building is designed in an Edwardian Baroque style. The central wing has a gabled slate roof with projecting pedimented parapeted gable end bays. The external walls are roughcast rendered, with ruled render trim. It has good integrity (VHD).



Figure 12. Rosina, Abbotsford Convent, Abbotsford, built in 1908. (Source: Context 2019)

Former Church of the Sacred Heart, 169–199 Rathdowne Street, Carlton (VHR H0016; HO107)

The Church of the Sacred Heart is the first Baroque inspired church designs in Victoria. It is constructed of red brick building with stone detailing and a symmetrical arrangement on each façade. The principal façade features a central pediment parapet that is flanked on either side by a domed tower. Along the side elevations, the structure is supported by buttresses with stone coping and evenly spaced circular windows on the first level. The interior is noted for its decorative features, including an elliptical barrel-vaulted ceiling; encaustic tiled floor; stained glass; and carved Stations of the Cross and altar.



Figure 13. Former Church of the Sacred Heart, 169–199 Rathdowne Street, Carlton, built in 1897–99. (Source: Victorian Heritage Database)

Sacred Heart Church, 83 Grey Street, St Kilda (VHR H1765; City of Port Phillip HO146)

The Baroque style Sacred Heart Church was built in 1884 to the design of Reed, Henderson and Smart. It was extended in 1922 to designs by the architect W P Connolly. Connolly's additions included a Baroque style tower of 36 metres with ox-bow parapet and copper dome surmounted by a statue of Christ. The church is constructed of brown face brickwork with stucco mouldings and a slate roof. The symmetrical front façade features a Tuscan order portico flanked by arch headed windows, deep buttresses and niches and blind oculi which continue around the sides. The interior has a barrel-vaulted ceiling and lunette windows in the blind arcading. The walls are decorated with stencilled and painted decoration believed to date from the 1940s (VHD).



Figure 14. Sacred Heart Church, St Kilda, built in 1884, extended in 1922. (Source: Victorian Heritage Database)

Stylistically, St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, South Yarra, is unique within the City of Melbourne. As a late architectural application of the Baroque style, it is distinct from other Catholic churches built in the postwar period.

Rosina, Abbotsford Convent (Figure 12); the former Church of the Sacred Heart, Carlton (Figure 13); and the Sacred Heart Church, St Kilda (Figure 14) are Catholic buildings with elements of the Baroque

style, but all have earlier construction dates. Like St Thomas Aquinas, Rosina has a multicurved parapet with ornate moulded cornices. The former Church of the Sacred Heart, Carlton, and the Sacred Heart Church, St Kilda have domed towers, ocular windows and pediments—features generally associated with the Baroque Revival style. The Carlton and St Kilda examples have intensely modulated façades compared to St Thomas Aquinas. Payne’s design for St Thomas Aquinas shows a much flatter treatment of the façade, with ornament applied to the surface through the shallow grooved pattern and tiles. This feature of the design gives the building a more modern appearance.

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church exhibits some similarities to other religious buildings designed by Payne. Payne would integrate elements of revival styles with modern forms to create buildings that were anachronistic and imaginative. Graeme Butler notes that Payne’s ‘idiosyncratic designs were widespread through suburban Catholic complexes’ and that each is ‘an object of wonderment’ (Butler 2017:58).

Within the City of Melbourne these other religious buildings include the Chapel of the Holy Spirit (1942) at Newman College, Parkville (Figure 10). Designed by Conolly, Dale and Payne, the chapel is Gothic in style, built during wartime. Another example is Payne’s two-storey extension (1959) to St Dominic’s Catholic Church, Camberwell (Figure 11), also Gothic in style. While stylistically different, these examples demonstrate Payne’s boldly anachronistic application of revival styles to religious architecture. There are some design elements that are consistent across Payne’s work: Payne’s designs, including the subject building, have narrow, symmetrical principal façades of significant height with centrally located openings. They feature ornate decorative elements, including arched openings; moulded window surrounds; stained glass; and tracery. Payne creates a strong vertical emphasis using paired pilasters that extend above the roofline in his designs for the church of the Holy Spirit and St Dominic’s church. The subject building, in contrast, is tallest at the centre of the parapet. The height and verticality of St Thomas Aquinas is emphasised by the moulded tablet and crucifix surmounting the parapet.

The above examples are comparable to the subject building in terms of their high levels of intactness and integrity.

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church is rare within the City of Melbourne with regards to its style. The subject building reflects a unique postwar interpretation of the Baroque style using modern materials and treatment of the façade surface. It shows likeness to Payne’s other architectural designs for religious buildings in its application of traditional styles in a modern context, its ornamentation, and its heightened proportions. The subject building sits well within Payne’s oeuvre and is representative of the architect’s unique revivalist style and the preferences of the religious clientele who commissioned his designs.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

CRITERION A

- ✓ Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
-

CRITERION B

- ✓ Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).
-

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

CRITERION D

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

CRITERION E

- ✓ Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).
-

CRITERION F

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

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).
-

CRITERION H

- ✓ Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history (associative significance).
-

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 39–45 Bromby Street, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

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

Melbourne Planning Scheme

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	Yes
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	Yes – Sculptural works including crucifix sculpture by Walter Langcake; the statue of St Thomas Aquinas; and carvings and statues by Leopoldine Mimovich
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01–4)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	No
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

Other

N/A

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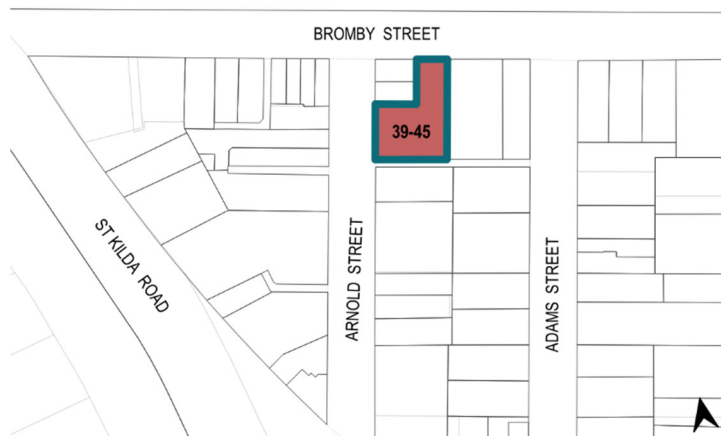
PREVIOUS STUDIES

South Yarra Conservation Study 1985 B

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church (chapel of ease)

PS ref no: ~~HOxxx~~ [HO1403](#)



What is significant?

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church (chapel of ease) at 39–45 Bromby Street, South Yarra, built in 1915 and remodelled in 1954 for the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation, is significant.

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

- building's 1915 external form, and 1954 materials and detailing
- building's high level of integrity to its 1915 and 1954 designs
- northern façade designed by Thomas G Payne, including cement moulded cornices, broken pediment, grooved diaper cross pattern, enamelled tiles, stained glass, buttresses, coping, moulded cornices, pediment, stone reliefs and its crucifixes
- pattern and size of original fenestration
- original hall's internal layout and timber carpentry
- carved sculptural works including the crucifix sculpture by woodcarver Walter Langcake (1937); the statue of St Thomas Aquinas (circa eighteenth century); and the Stations of the Cross carvings and statues of Our Lady and the Sacred Heart of Jesus by artist Leopoldine Mimovich (dates unknown).

More-recent alterations and additions, including the steel fence, are not significant.

How is it significant?

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church (chapel of ease) at 39–45 Bromby Street, South Yarra, is of local historical, rarity, aesthetic, social and associative significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church (chapel of ease) at 39–45 Bromby Street, South Yarra, is of local historical significance to the City of Melbourne as an example of a chapel of ease built in 1915 to serve the needs of the Catholic population in the western end of the parish. Although the number of Catholics within the Parish of South Yarra in the early twentieth century was relatively low, the population was

spread thinly across a large area, and it was difficult for some to get to the parish church (St Joseph's Church), on Fitzgerald Street, South Yarra. The subject building is significant for its demonstration of sociodemographic patterns in the South Yarra area, its purpose being to serve the needs of the servant class in the South Yarra area of the City of Melbourne, many of whom were Catholic domestic servants. (Criterion A)

Architect Thomas G Payne's 1954 remodelling of the 1915 church hall, designed by Kempson and Conolly, is of historical significance as an example of divergent architectural approaches to religious postwar architecture. The postwar period was marked by a distinct shift away from revivalist style architecture and the growing influence and application of Modernist design principles for religious buildings across suburban Melbourne. Payne's design for St Thomas Aquinas is a pivotal example of the conservative counterpoint to this architectural debate. It represents the cohort of architects and church organisations that believed traditional or revival styles were the most appropriate styles to use in designing places of worship. Conolly and Payne were prominent architects who, drawing on revival styles, designed many buildings for the Catholic Church in twentieth-century Melbourne. (Criterion A)

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church has significance for its demonstration of an uncommon architectural design within the City of Melbourne. The 1954 modified façade and rear additions are an example of the work of Thomas G Payne. The church is a unique example of the Baroque style applied to a postwar church in the City of Melbourne. It is a unique interpretation of the Baroque Revival, a style that is rare within the City of Melbourne and divergent from Modernist-style approaches to postwar religious architecture. It displays key elements of the Baroque style, including the tiled and grooved surfaces, ornate curvilinear parapet, cement mouldings and stained-glass multicurved window. (Criterion B)

The exterior and interior of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church have aesthetic significance to the City of Melbourne. The façade has an original composition and style, exhibiting a high degree of craftsmanship and architectural merit. The principal façade is symmetrically composed, with decorative cement mouldings, grooved surface patterns and locally fired glazed tiles with symbolic motifs. Its highly ornate detailing contributes to its unusual and striking character. Internally, the exposed timber queen post truss ceiling with curved supporting brackets and the timber sculptural works exhibit a high level of carpentry and artistic quality. The church contains an important collection of timber sculptural works. These include the near-life-size crucifix sculpture by woodcarver and sculptor Walter Langcake; the statue of St Thomas Aquinas; and the Stations of the Cross carvings and statues of Our Lady and the Sacred Heart of Jesus by artist Leopoldine Mimovich. (Criterion E)

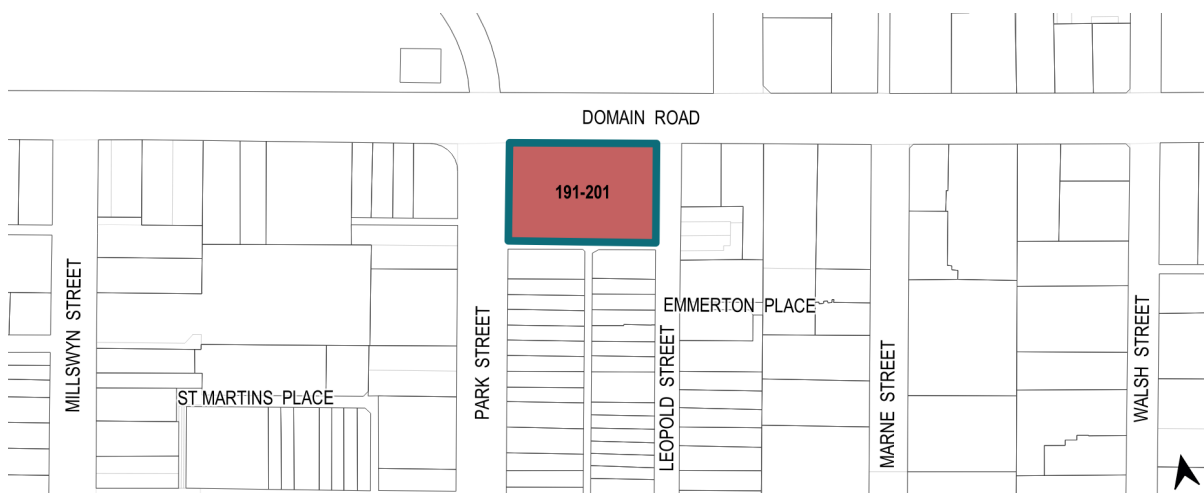
The St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church is socially significant to the City of Melbourne. It has been used continuously as a place of worship for over 105 years. The congregation of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church forms a specific community who use and visit the place regularly and have continuously since its establishment; this suggests that ~~there~~^{there} is some form of community attachment that spans multiple generations. St Thomas Aquinas Church is a publicly accessible building in which a community function (religious worship) is provided. This function is clearly identifiable in the external fabric of the building, evident in the crucifixes and Christogram tiles. St Thomas Aquinas Church is identified as having social significance on the basis that it provides a setting for a defined community to gather and participate in a cultural practice. (Criterion G).

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church is significant for its associations with the architects Kempson and Conolly and Thomas G Payne (1906–1983). Conolly and Payne produced designs for several Catholic churches in Melbourne during the twentieth century. Among these, the subject building is a unique and striking example that attracted the attention of architectural critics and the public. Within Payne's oeuvre, St Thomas Aquinas is one of his best known works, and is an important milestone in his career. (Criterion H)

Primary source

South Yarra Heritage Review 2022 ([updated March 2024](#)) (GML Heritage)

SITE NAME: Domain Park
STREET ADDRESS: 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra
PROPERTY ID: 102508



SURVEY DATE:	January 2021	SURVEY BY:	GML Heritage
PLACE TYPE:	Individual Heritage Place	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY:	HO6 South Yarra Precinct
PROPOSED CATEGORY:	Significant	FORMER GRADE:	Ungraded
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Grounds, Romberg and Boyd (Robin Boyd)	BUILDER:	Civil and Civic Pty Ltd
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Postwar Period (1945–1975)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	1960–62

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES:	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES:
Research undertaken in preparing this citation did not identify any clear or direct associations with Aboriginal people or organisations.	N/A
HISTORICAL THEMES:	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES:
6 Shaping a residential area	6.4 Postwar residential development

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual Heritage place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map.

SUMMARY

Designed by prominent architect Robin Boyd in 1959, Domain Park was constructed in 1960–62 by Civil and Civic Pty Ltd for Lend

Lease Development Pty Ltd. The block of 20-storey Modernist own-your-own (OYO) apartments overlooking the Royal Botanic Gardens is a pioneering example of this building type. Domain Park is the only example of high-rise residential building that was built to a design by Robin Boyd, who saw the high-rise blocks as an essential solution for accommodating the population that was concentrated near the city centre. The building features a narrow rectangular form with separated service towers and the façade with abstract composition. Comprising two 180-foot-high (55m-high) service towers, Domain Park was the tallest residential building in Melbourne at the time of its construction and the first fully air-conditioned high-rise residential building in Australia.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Flats in Melbourne

The first purpose-built block of flats in Melbourne, Melbourne Mansions, was constructed in Collins Street in 1906. From the 1910s, medium-density housing such as bachelor flats, maisonettes and cooperative developments were popular in Melbourne. Several blocks were constructed prior to World War I, including Fawkner Mansions in South Yarra; Whitehall in Bank Place, Melbourne; and Cliveden Mansions in East Melbourne (O’Hanlon 2008).

During the interwar period, the blocks of flats constructed were mostly along St Kilda Road and Queens Road, as well as in South Yarra, Toorak, East Melbourne, Hawthorn, St Kilda and Parkville. Blocks of flats were mostly low rise, with two or three storeys, and were typically let, making them a form of investment in the aftermath of the economic downturn (O’Hanlon 2008). While flats were favoured by single people or young couples, they also became fashionable for the middle-income families in Toorak and South Yarra (Context 2009:145). Some examples in Marne Street and Toorak Road West, South Yarra, were spacious and designed for families. The economic downturn made it unfeasible for many to run a grand home on a large estate, and by the 1930s many large older residences in Melbourne had been divided into flats.

The self-ownership, or ‘own-your-own’ (OYO), model came about at the end of the 1940s, in response to the problem of inflated building costs, which prevented economic return on investment in flats for rent (*Construction*, 21 April 1954:32). The OYO flats built in Hawthorn in 1949 and Stanhill in Queens Road, Melbourne (1945–50), both designed by Frederick Romberg, were pioneering examples of modern flats and they introduced the model of owner-occupied flats to Melbourne in the postwar period (Heritage Alliance 2008:23). Another leading promoter of ‘self-ownership’ flats was Sir Bernard Evans (an architect, and lord mayor of Melbourne in 1959–61), who campaigned for apartment buildings in the city and the subsequent introduction of strata title legislation (Butler-Bowden and Pickett 2007:114).

The fact that Melbourne’s population was concentrated near the city centre contributed to the development of larger and taller blocks in inner suburbs in the postwar period. As Robin Boyd had pointed out, high-rise residential development was considered a solution for the increased density around the city centre (Serle 1996: Chapter 11).

High-rise residential buildings built in the early 1960s became landmarks on the city’s periphery (Heritage Alliance 2008:23). Built on the edge of the Royal Botanic Gardens, the nine-storey Fairlie flats, at 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra (Yuncken Freeman, 1961), was one of the first luxury high-rise block of flats in Melbourne. The 13-storey Edgewater Towers (Mordechai Benshemesh, 1961), on St Kilda Beach, was one of the earliest, completed by October 1961, and was the highest residential tower in Victoria for a short period. The record was broken the following year when the 17-storey Emerald Hill Court, South Melbourne (Sir Bernard Evans, 1962), designed for the Housing Commission of Victoria, and the 20-storey Domain Park, South Yarra (Grounds, Romberg and Boyd, 1962), were completed.

Private developers often called the high-rise blocks ‘apartments’ (typically between six and 20 or more storeys) for marketing purposes, distinguishing this new type of building from low-rise flats or Housing Commission flats (O’Hanlon 2008).

The introduction of the individual strata title in 1967, following the enactment of the *Strata Titles Act* 1967, led to the apartment boom; however, subsequent developers did not embark upon a battle for height (Heritage Alliance 2008:23; Butler-Bowden and Pickett 2007:114). Domain Park remained the tallest until the end of 1960s, when luxury high-rise blocks of flats were built at the eastern end of the city centre. Viennese-born émigré architect Kurt Popper built two blocks in central Melbourne: the 20-storey Park Tower at 199–207 Spring Street (1969), and a 22-storey block at 13–15 Collins Street

(1970). Treasury Gate at 93–101 Spring Street (Moore & Hammond, 1971) followed the trend with 28 storeys. The 11-storey Exhibition Towers at 287–293 Exhibition Street, Melbourne (Kenneth McDonald & Associates 1969–71), was initially designed as a private residential block but was opened as Courtesy Inn Motel in 1971 due to low sales.

SITE HISTORY

The site is on the traditional country of the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation. The land at 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra, is part of Crown Allotment 18 in the parish of Melbourne South. Purchased from the Crown by H W Mason in 1849, it later became popularly known as ‘Mason’s Paddock’. Advertised as ‘South Yarra Hill’, the subdivisional sale of Mason’s Paddock was held in December 1888. The subject site comprised lots 30, 31, 32, 33 and 33A of the subdivision. Each allotment had a 40-foot frontage to Domain Road and was priced at £9 (‘South Yarra Hill’ 1888; CoMMaps). Three residences —193, 197 and 199 Domain Road—existed on the subject site. The building at 193 Domain Road had been occupied by the Royal Victorian Bowling Association in the 1950s until c1959 when the land at 191–201 Domain Road was cleared for the construction of Domain Park (S&Mc 1920, 1942, 1950, 1960).

Designed in 1959 and constructed in 1960–62, Domain Park at 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra, is a 20-storey block of own-your-own (OYO) flats, initially marketed as ‘residential suites’ rather than ‘flats’, overlooking the Royal Botanic Gardens. The developer Lend Lease Development, a subsidiary of the Sydney-based Lend Lease Corporation, appointed architectural partnership Grounds, Romberg and Boyd and contractors Civil and Civil Pty Ltd.

Located on an allotment measuring 191 feet to Domain Road and with a depth of 130 feet to Park Street, the £1 million residential block was to comprise 59 one, two and three-bedroom luxury suites and a rooftop penthouse (*Age*, 5 October 1961:6). The block was designed to house the maximum number of flats permissible under the regulations (Serle 1995:196–198). Each of the two-to four-bedroom flats had a north-facing balcony. The narrow plan of the block enabled all flats to occupy the entire width of the building and each of the 59 flats had two-way views across the Botanic Gardens to the north and towards Port Phillip Bay to the south (*Age*, 5 June 1962:5; Serle 1995:196). Each flat was fitted out with walnut joinery, which could be custom designed to suit the owner’s taste in consultation with the architects (*Age*, 7 June 1960:3).

By February 1962, two 180-foot-high (55m-high) service towers had been erected. At the time of its completion, Domain Park was the tallest structure in suburban Melbourne. It surpassed the then tallest 13-storey ‘Edgewater Towers’ in St Kilda, completed in 1961, which was the first privately developed high-rise residential building erected in Melbourne (*Age*, 22 February 1962:5).

Domain Park was claimed to be the first fully air-conditioned high-rise residential building in Australia. The living areas were equipped with a fan-coil air-conditioning system, serviced by the two towers at the rear. Car parking for residents was provided in the basement, with visitor parking on the ground level. Its setting within an island-like block surrounded by roads on all four sides was another selling point as this prevented it from being built-out by surrounding buildings (*Age*, 1 November 1961:10).

The Domain Park building was initially criticised for its scale and immediate visibility from the Royal Botanic Gardens, although the Melbourne City Council’s regulations at the time specifically permitted high-rise apartments when they were opposite parks. Similarly, a report by the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works had recommended that residential towers be constructed around parks (Serle 1995:198). Sales of the flats were slow in the early years due to the opposition to the building by residents. When Domain Park was opened in April 1963 after 15 months of construction, only half of the flats were purchased. While the flats later gained popularity, it is thought that the early rate of sales may

have impacted Boyd's future relationship with Civil & Civic. The price of the apartments varied according to height and size. The cost increased from £12,750 on the first floor with two bedrooms, to £26,900 on the 17th floor. Each of the two penthouses were sold at £37,500 (*Age*, 26 March 1963:5).

The design was almost entirely Boyd's, with the involvement of Grounds and Romberg in the initial planning stage (Serle 1995: 196–198). Boyd wrote that Domain Park, the tallest residential building in Melbourne, represented:

... one extreme in the range of personal tastes for types of shelter for living in Australia. It is the big city block of many flats, each flat a home but practically anonymous externally (despite a scatter of balconies here, placed to suit different internal arrangements...) (Serle 1995:196).

Despite his interest in high-rise development, Domain Park is the only example of a high-rise residential building designed by Robin Boyd, and today remains as one of the most visible buildings viewed from the Royal Botanic Gardens and within South Yarra.

In 2015, the enduring merit of Domain Park was recognised by its receipt of the annual Enduring Architecture Award presented by the Victorian Chapter of the Architectural Institute of Australia for buildings over the age of 25 years.

Robin Boyd (1919–1971), architect

Robin Boyd was a highly influential architect, architectural historian, critic and educator. He trained at the University of Melbourne and was articled to A & K Henderson. He became active in architectural writing and editing the influential Royal Victorian Institute of Architects Students' Society journal, *Smudges*, in 1939 before publishing Victoria's first history of modern architecture, *Victoria Modern*, in 1947 (Goad 2009:290).

Boyd was a leader in Melbourne's Modern Architecture movement and a visionary in Australian urban design. His design promoted interaction between the built and natural environments, contemporary lifestyle and Australian identity (Serle 1995:i). Boyd was the Director of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects Small Homes Service after World War II and gained a public reputation through this work. Boyd, more than any other architect at the time, provided the drive for the Small Homes Service to succeed, by bringing the best of what architects had to offer to the average Australian family who needed to build a home in the economically austere times immediately after World War II when there were shortages of building materials and labour.

Boyd went on to design many early Australian project homes, and in 1953 formed a highly influential practice with Frederick Romberg and Roy Grounds. Grounds, Romberg and Boyd (Romberg and Boyd by 1962) went on to become an influential and leading practice in Melbourne, although each of the principals tended to operate independently within the office and there were clear differences between the work of the three (Goad 2009:291; Goad 2012:102).

For a period in the late 1950s, Boyd taught at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, USA. In 1969, he was awarded the RAIA Gold Medal and in January 1971 he was made CBE (Commander, Order of the British Empire). He continued to practice until his sudden death on 16 October 1971 (Goad 2012:102).

Historian Geoffrey Serle wrote that, for Boyd, 'Domain Park was an achievement of which he was proud'. The architect considered the tower blocks as an essential solution for concentrating of population near the city centre. After the construction of Domain Park, Boyd designed seven or eight high-rise residential blocks in East Melbourne and South Yarra. The key design influences represented in the sketches were the Interbau housing development in Berlin (1957), designed by Walter Gropius and The

Architect's Collaborative (TAC), and Japanese Metabolist notions of stacked floor plates with vertical service towers and Paul Rudolph's spatial platforms (Goad 2009:186). These visions were not realised, however, due to the economic downturn and mixed reactions to Domain Park (Serle 1996:264–265; Goad 2012:102).

SITE DESCRIPTION

Domain Park at 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra, is a 20-storey own-your-own (OYO) residential building overlooking the Royal Botanic Gardens. Domain Park is in an 'island' block bound by Domain Road to the north, Park Street and Leopold Street to the west and east respectively, and a right-of-way on the south (Figure 1).

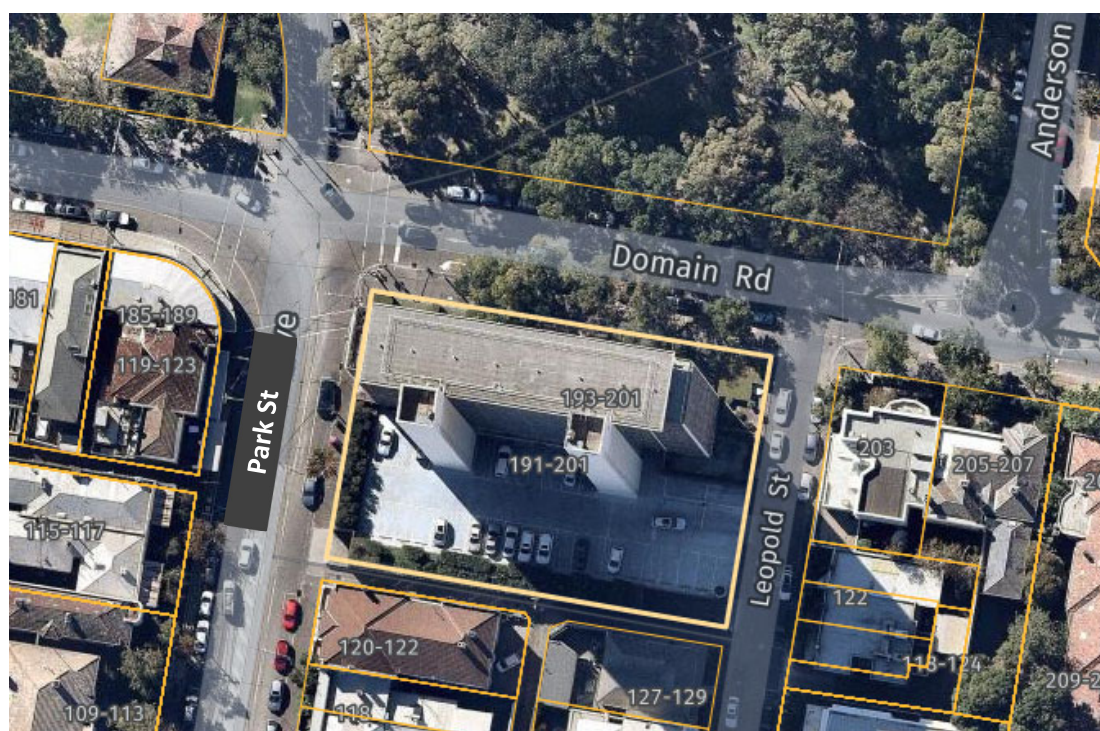


Figure 1. 191–201 Domain Road, outlined in light yellow. (Source: Nearmap 2021 with GML overlay)

The building displays characteristics associated with the international idiom of Modernist architecture including its simple geometric volumes, modular façade patterning, lack of ornament and restricted palette.

Constructed with reinforced concrete, the building is an elongated rectangle in plan form, with a long north facing elevation addressing Domain Road and the Royal Botanical Gardens beyond and narrow elevations to the east and west with face manganese brick cladding between the expressed concrete floor plates. The leading edges on the primary (north) elevation and exposed concrete floor plates on the side elevations reflect the internal structural grid. Divided into eight equal vertical bays, the primary elevation integrates open balconies with glass balustrades arranged in a simple geometric pattern interposed with recessed windows above dark brown brick spandrels (Figure 2). The modular composition of balconies was intended to allow for various apartment layouts without altering the structural rhythm of the façade. The window frames appear to be original aluminium frames.

Penthouses occupy the top floor. The penthouses feature curtain walls on the north elevation and flat roofs with projecting eaves. The lobby occupies three bays at street level, featuring two layers of full

height glazing. Original walnut handrails and fixtures and metal lettering reading 'Domain Park' by the entrance are retained (Figure 3). The automatic doors are a later addition.



Figure 2. Section of the primary elevation in 2020, showing the intact original detailing. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Arranged in a symmetrical composition, the rear (south) elevation is clad in brown brick matching the spandrels on the north elevation. The concrete walls originally painted in brighter white are currently overpainted in darker, creamy shade. Window openings on this elevation are smaller. The two 180-foot-high (55m-high) service towers integrating lift wells and service plants are on this elevation. Between the two service towers are open service balconies providing access to the flats (Figure 4). On each level, there are small rectangular openings on the east and west walls of the towers for provision of natural light to the fire staircases. The floor slabs of the two service towers are separated from the main tower to minimise the noise transmitted (Figure 5). The building has a secondary point of access from the carpark to the south.

The building has a slight setback from street. Modest hedging and garden beds are provided on the either side of the paved footpath. To the south of the block, visitors' parking has been provided on the ground, with residents' parking in the basement accessed from a driveway on the southeast corner of the allotment.



Figure 3. The front entrance and the metal lettering reading 'Domain Park'. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 4. View of the rear elevation. Note the smaller openings on this elevation, openings on the fire staircase and the open service balconies between the service towers. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)



Figure 5. Plan of internal layout on the second and 12th floors, showing flat types A-C. (Source: Ben Brendan 2013 via Wikimedia Commons)

INTEGRITY

Domain Park at 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra, is highly intact to its construction in 1960–62 with very few changes visible. The building retains the original narrow rectangular form, the abstract composition of the primary elevation achieved through incorporation of open balconies mixed in with recessed windows above dark brown masonry spandrels, and the detailing of the exterior including the original face brick cladding (manganese brick on side elevations and brown brick on the front and rear elevations). Other key original elements include aluminium window frames, and the walnut fixtures in the lobby. The intact service towers and open service balconies on the south elevation also contribute to the integrity of the place. Later changes include the addition of automatic doors in the lobby and recent overpainting (in darker, creamy shade) of contrasts and service towers. Overall, the building retains a very high degree of integrity to its Modernist architectural design in fabric, form and detail.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Domain Park represents a new building type in its form and aesthetics — the modern residential tower building — that gained popularity in Melbourne in the late 1960s/early 1970s. These architect-designed multi-storey residential blocks adopted Modernist architectural expression and were characterised by simplicity of structure and minimisation of decoration. Built in Melbourne's inner suburbs (today's City of Melbourne, City of Port Phillip and City of Stonnington), the earliest high-rise flats are gradually gaining

heritage recognition. The 13-storey Edgewater Towers (Mordechai Benshemesh, 1961) on St Kilda Beach, one of the earliest examples in Melbourne, was recommended as an individually significant place by the City of Port Phillip in *Port Phillip Heritage Review Update, 2019* (prepared by David Helms Heritage Planning). The block of flats at 333 Beaconsfield Parade, St Kilda (Sol Sapir, 1968–70), which is noted as the best and biggest example of St Kilda’s high-rise flats, is listed on the Heritage Overlay (HO287, City of Port Phillip).

In the City of Melbourne, the following examples are comparable to Fairlie flats at 54–60 Anderson Street. Four residential towers from the postwar period are on the Heritage Overlay with interim protection and Domain Park at 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra, is recommended as individually significant in this study.

Park Tower, 199–207 Spring Street, Melbourne (HO1263)

Designed by émigré architect Kurt Popper, Park Tower is an early example of the residential apartments that emerged in central Melbourne in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The 20-storey residential building has a two-storey base/podium built to the property boundary with a 16-storey tower set back from the street and two levels of basement carparking. It is distinctly Modernist in form and aesthetic, with a curtain walled façade that features an abstract arrangement of brick spandrels and masonry balconies (Context and GJM Heritage 2020:1190–1203).



Figure 6. 199–207 Spring Street, Melbourne, built in 1969. (Source: Context 2017)

13–15 Collins Street, Melbourne (HO1265)

Also designed by Kurt Popper, 13–15 Collins Street, Melbourne, is an example of residential apartments that emerged in central Melbourne in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Completed in late 1970, 13–15 Collins Street was one of Melbourne’s most luxurious blocks of strata title residential apartments. It is distinctly Modernist in form and aesthetic, with a curtain walled façade that features a rhythmic arrangement of brown brick spandrels and masonry balconies (Context and GJM Heritage 2020:200–207).



Figure 7. 13–15 Collins Street, Melbourne, built in 1970. (Source: Context 2017)

Treasury Gate, 93–101 Spring Street, Melbourne (HO1262)

Treasury Gate was designed by architects Moore & Hammond as a combined office and residential complex. The 28-floor block comprises 19 residential floors, four levels of office spaces, a recreation floor, a ground-level retail floor and three levels of underground parking areas. It is distinctly Modernist in form and aesthetic, and suggestive of the Brutalist style in its deliberate expression of concrete and brick (Context and GJM Heritage 2020:1171–1187).



Figure 8. 93–101 Spring Street, Melbourne, built in 1971. (Source: Context 2018)

Former Exhibition Towers, 287–293 Exhibition Street, Melbourne (HO1333)

The Former Exhibition Towers, a multistorey building on the northwest corner of Exhibition and Little Lonsdale streets, was designed by architect Kenneth McDonald & Associates, for owners Danbry Pty Ltd. It was initially designed and advertised as residential apartments but opened as the Courtesy Inn Motel in 1971 (Context and GJM Heritage 2020:686–702).



Figure 9. 287–293 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, built in 1969–71. (Source: GJM Heritage 2019)

Fairlie flats, 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra (recommended as an individual heritage place in this Review)

Designed by Yuncken Freeman Brothers, Griffiths & Simpson, Fairlie was built in 1961 by E A Watts Pty Ltd. The Modernist block of nine-storey flats overlooking the Royal Botanic Gardens is one of the earliest high-rise flats, predating the enactment of the *Conveyancing (Strata Titles) Act* in 1967. It was the first luxury high-rise block built in Melbourne. Embracing modular design aesthetics, Fairlie is distinguished for its delicate design in terms of its form and modular aesthetics, restricted palette, and the interplay of light and shadow. Its lightweight ground floor treatment is also distinct.



Figure 10. 54–60 Anderson Street, South Yarra, built in 1961. (Source: GML Heritage 2021)

Domain Park compares well with the above examples of postwar high-rise flats in the City of Melbourne. The subject building demonstrates the key characteristics observed in all examples above. The characteristic elements include the use of the reinforced concrete frame, non-loadbearing wall surfaces such as curtain walls, and juxtaposition with opaque infill panels. The combination of a high level of glazing and open balconies in the primary elevation is a key element, which sets the residential block of flats apart from the high-rise office blocks developed around the same period that often adopt flat, fully or almost fully glazed façade systems.

The inner-city examples such as the Park Tower at 199–207 Spring Street, 13–15 Collins Street, Treasury Gate at 93–101 Spring Street and Exhibition Towers at 287–293 Exhibition Street, all in Melbourne, embraced similar façade designs, incorporating bays of open balconies mixed in with bays of windows. 199–207 Spring Street and 13–15 Collins Street, both designed by émigré architect Kurt Popper, are especially similar in terms of use of free form composition. Unlike Domain Park or Fairlie, these inner-city apartments included podiums and ground-level shops.

An earlier block of flats, Fairlie at 54–60 Anderson Street (recommended as individually significant in this review) has a relatively uniform façade. Fairlie’s uniform composition of the prefabricated concrete grid, echoes many postwar high-rise office designs that reached Melbourne in the mid–1950s. For its construction period and location on the edge of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Fairlie closely compares to Domain Park.

Domain Park is distinguished for its narrow rectangular form, with service towers at the rear separated from the main building. The provision of each suite across the north-south depth of the building allowed access to light and views to both ways, which reflects Boyd’s spatial concerns for living space. Domain Park is also important as an example of Boyd’s only realised design for high-rise living. Boyd advocated on the matter of high-rise living but his later designs were unrealised. The design of Domain Park was influenced by the contemporary International movement and architectural debates about high-rise living.

Overall, Domain Park is a pioneering example of Modernist high-rise apartments characterised by its simple geometric volumes, modular façade patterning, lack of ornament and restricted palette.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

CRITERION A

- ✓ Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history (historical significance).
-

CRITERION B

Possession of uncommon rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history (rarity).

CRITERION C

Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history (research potential).

CRITERION D

- ✓ Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).
-

CRITERION E

- ✓ Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).
-

CRITERION F

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

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).

CRITERION H

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual Heritage place.

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

Melbourne Planning Scheme

EXTERNAL PAINT CONTROLS	Yes – As per original paint scheme
INTERNAL ALTERATION CONTROLS	No
TREE CONTROLS	No
OUTBUILDINGS OR FENCES (Which are not exempt under Clause 43.01–4)	No
TO BE INCLUDED ON THE VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER	Yes
PROHIBITED USES MAY BE PERMITTED	No
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE PLACE	No

Other

Recommended to be nominated to be included on the Victorian Heritage Register.

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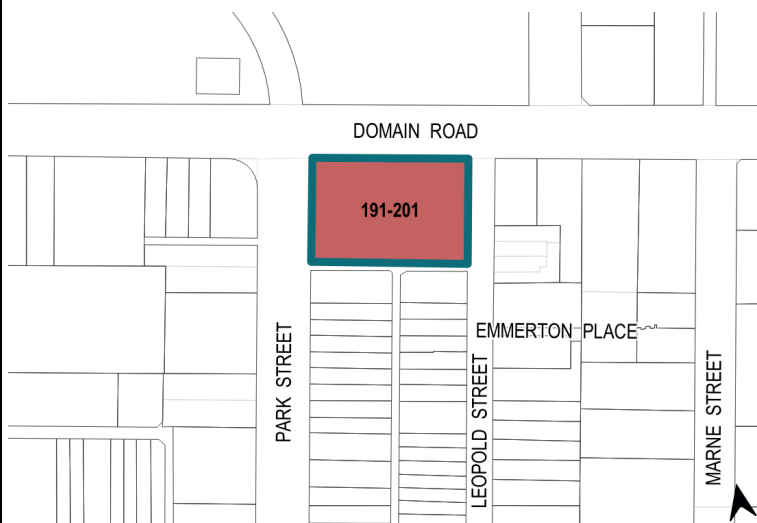
PREVIOUS STUDIES

South Yarra Conservation Study 1985 Ungraded

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage Place: Domain Park

PS ref no: ~~HOxxx~~ [HO1404](#)



What is significant?

Domain Park at 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra, built in 1960–62 and designed by Robin Boyd, is significant.

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

- building's original simple geometric form including the flat roof, narrow rectangular main tower, and two service towers and connecting open balconies to the south
- building's original materials
- building's high level of integrity to its original design representative of the Modernist style, including the modular composition of the north elevation incorporating open balconies interposed with recessed windows above dark brown masonry spandrels
- detailing of the exterior including the 'Domain Park' lettering, original face brick cladding (manganese brick on side elevations and brown brick on the front and rear elevations) contrasted with bright white concrete walls (currently overpainted in a darker, creamy shade) and expressed concrete floor plates

- pattern and size of original fenestration of the rear elevation, as well as the intact service towers and open service balconies
- other original elements including aluminium window frames, and the walnut fixtures in the lobby.

More recent alterations and additions to the lobby are not significant.

How is it significant?

Domain Park at 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra, is of local historical, representative, aesthetic and technical significance to the City of Melbourne.

Why is it significant?

Domain Park at 191–201 Domain Road, South Yarra, is historically significant as one of the earliest high-rise residential towers constructed in the inner suburbs in the early 1960s. Designed in 1959 by prominent architect Robin Boyd and constructed in 1960–62, the block of 20-storey own-your-own (OYO) apartments, comprising two 180-foot-high (55m-high) service towers, was the tallest structure in Melbourne’s suburbs and the tallest building of its type for almost a decade. Domain Park was a pioneering example of a Modernist style high-rise residential building that predated other examples in the inner city constructed from the late 1960s and early 1970s. Domain Park is the only example of high-rise residential building that was built to a design by Robin Boyd, who envisioned high-rise development and led the public and professional debate regarding urban density and new forms of residential accommodation. (Criterion A)

Domain Park is of representative significance as a pioneering example of a new typology that emerged in the early 1960s in Melbourne — the modern high-rise residential building. The building displays defining elements of the Modernist high-rise residential apartments, characterised by simplicity of structure and minimisation of decoration. The building’s use of the reinforced concrete frame and non-loadbearing brick-clad walls on side and rear elevations, the mixture of a high level of glazing and open balconies in the primary elevation are representative features of this evolving typology. (Criterion D)

Domain Park is aesthetically significant for its Modernist architectural design characterised by its simple geometric volumes, modular façade patterning, lack of ornament and restricted palette. Inspired by international counterparts, Boyd’s spatial concerns are reflected in the building’s narrow rectangular form with two service towers at the rear and the modular composition of balconies and recessed windows which allowed for various apartment layouts without altering the structural rhythm of the façade. Separation of service towers from the main floor plate aimed at achieving reduced noise transmission to the main living space. The provision of each suite across the north-south depth of the building allowed access to light and views both ways, across the Botanic Gardens to the north and towards Port Phillip Bay to the south. Its visual dominance in the surrounding, as well as the immediate views from the Royal Botanic Gardens also contribute to the building’s aesthetic significance. The outstanding merit of Domain Park was recognised by winning the 2015 Victorian Chapter Enduring Architecture Awards. (Criterion E)

Domain Park is also of technical significance, as the first fully air-conditioned high-rise residential building in Australia. The living areas were equipped with a fan-coil air-conditioning system, serviced by the two towers at the rear. (Criterion F)

Primary source

South Yarra Heritage Review 2022 ([updated March 2024](#)) (GML Heritage)

SITE NAME: Former Fawkner Club Hotel

STREET ADDRESS: 2–14 Hope Street, South Yarra

PROPERTY ID: 109532



SURVEY DATE:	March 2021	SURVEY BY:	GML Heritage
PLACE TYPE:	Individual Heritage Place	EXISTING HERITAGE OVERLAY:	HO6 South Yarra Precinct
PROPOSED CATEGORY:	Significant	FORMER GRADE:	C
DESIGNER / ARCHITECT / ARTIST:	Alexander Davidson and Co (1882), D'Ebro, McKenzie and Meldrum (1925)	BUILDER:	Not known
DEVELOPMENT PERIOD:	Victorian Period (1851–1901) Interwar Period (c1919–1940)	DATE OF CREATION / MAJOR CONSTRUCTION:	c1855, 1882 (additions), 1925 (alterations)

THEMES

ABORIGINAL THEMES:	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES:
1 Living on Country	-
2 Making contact with newcomers	2.1 Encounters and negotiating access to Country
HISTORICAL THEMES:	DOMINANT SUB-THEMES:
14 Commerce and trade	14.1 Hotels

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend inclusion of 2–14 Hope Street, South Yarra, in the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay of the Melbourne Planning Scheme as an individual heritage place.

Recommend addition to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register as an Aboriginal Historical Place.

Extent of overlay: Refer to map.

SUMMARY

The former South Melbourne Hotel (renamed Fawkner Club Hotel in 1887) was built c1855. The hotel was frequented by Bunurong Elder 'Mr Man' (Mingaragon, Mongarra) in the 1860s. In 1882 modifications were made to the hotel building including an extension fronting Toorak Road and the addition of an adjoining residence. In 1925, further modifications were made to the building, including the creation of the splayed entrance and insertion of openings that connected the former residence and hotel buildings internally. By this time, the 1882 residence was converted to a second bar and liquor store. From c1855–1998 the site was continuously used as a hotel. From 1998 it has been a fine dining venue.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Hotels in Melbourne

Nineteenth-century public hotels played an important role in Melbourne's early development. Typically located on prominent corner sites, especially on main arterial roads, hotels were familiar landmarks that provided entertainment, food and drink, and accommodation to visitors and locals. Many hotels also provided a rest stop for horses and often incorporated stables. Public hotels were also used as venues for election polls, coroners' inquests, and informal meetings for communities or professional groups in the nineteenth century. Publicans typically lived on site.

The development of hotels in Melbourne has been largely shaped by liquor licensing legislation. Legislation in the 1830s required that licensed premises provide accommodation to the public and the sale of alcohol was limited to consumption on the premises only (Dunstan 2008). Melbourne's earliest hotels were modest buildings, typically constructed of timber (Dunstan 2008). The rapid increase in the immigrant population in the 1850s increased the demand for hotels in Melbourne. Several hotels were established in South Yarra in the 1850s, including the Botanical Hotel on Domain Road (1854); the South Melbourne Hotel (later known as the Fawkner Club Hotel) (c1855) in Toorak Road; and an early hotel near Clowes Street (c1850s). The increased population and wealth circulating from the goldrushes contributed to the booming hotel trade in Melbourne in the 1850s and 1860s. Hotel trading hours were restricted to Monday–Saturday, however many establishments conducted illegal after-hours trade; the authorities often overlooked 'sly grog' activity during this period (Dunstan 2008). In the 1870s social reformers and temperance activists in Victoria were successful in reducing hotel trading hours.

Working-class inner-city districts had many more hotels than suburban areas. For example, Collingwood had 87 hotels, Richmond 64 and Footscray 33, while Hawthorn and Kew had nine and seven respectively (Dunstan 2008). Hotels were typically places where men congregated, although women often worked as publicans and hotel staff. Hotels varied in their perceived levels of respectability (Dunstan 2008).

In 1885 the Victorian Parliament proposed new regulations to the licensing act, including the prohibition of barmaids and a statutory fix on the number of hotels allowed in a district according to the population, thereby enabling communities to limit the number of hotels in the area.

In the early 1900s, falling hotel standards and pressure from the temperance movement prompted the Victorian government to reduce the number of liquor licenses. The Licenses Reduction Board was appointed in 1907 under the *Licensing Act 1906*. The board's purpose was to reduce the number of hotel licenses in Victoria. Hotels were assessed on factors such as the character of premises, whether they provided adequate accommodation, their business conduct and record of past offences against the Liquor Acts. *Between* 1907 and 1916 the Board closed 1054 hotels (PROV 2021). Many hotel buildings were demolished or adapted to other uses because of these closures.

The *Licensing Act 1906* provided that ten years after the creation of the Board, there should be local polls held in every district to determine whether further reductions should be made (PROV 2021). The first of these polls was supposed to happen in 1917 but was postponed until 1920. In 1919 six o'clock closing was made permanent and remained in place until 1966 (Dunstan 2008). This established a problematic daily pattern of excessive drinking in the hour or so before closing by men who had finished work for the day. Polls taken in 1920 and 1922 provided that the Board should continue its work (PROV 2021). In turn, many hotel owners upgraded and refurbished their buildings during the 1920s and 1930s in order to retain their liquor licenses (Dunstan 2008).

The reduction in the number of hotels was met with a rise in small-scale boarding houses as places offering accommodation in the interwar period. An example of such boarding houses in the area is The

Oaks (65 Park Street, South Yarra), built in 1902 for Elias Cunliff in a domestic residential style as a superior class of boarding house for those visiting Melbourne for special occasions.

The interwar period also saw the introduction of purpose-built high-end hotels and residential hotels. The Chevron Hotel, St Kilda Road, which opened as a residential hotel in 1934, provided considerable glamour to hotel living with the luxuries of a swimming pool and tennis courts. Large Victorian-era hotels in the central city came under risk of demolition during the building boom of the 1960s and 1970s. Some of the remaining early hotel buildings have been refurbished as restaurants, cafes, housing or offices.

SITE HISTORY

The place occupies the traditional Country of the Bunurong people. The subject site is located on Crown Allotment 15, Parish of South Melbourne, and was first purchased by N Guthridge in 1849 as an area of just over 9 acres (City of Melbourne 1922).

William Stevenson was the first owner of the building erected on the subject site (*Argus*, 1 June 1855:2). This building, the South Melbourne Hotel, was built c1853–1855 (Figure 1) as a two-storey brick building with stone foundations and a slate-clad roof (*Age*, 22 April 1980:24; *Argus*, 15 February 1855:2). The building had 'good sized rooms, with detached stables and large yard' (*Argus*, 15 February 1855:2). Its construction preceded the subdivision of Crown Allotment 15 in 1855.

In 1855, Stevenson put the site up for sale via public auction. The entire estate, which contained the hotel and 5.5 acres of land, was subdivided and advertised for sale (*Argus*, 15 February 1855:2). The site faced Toorak Road, which was then known as Gardiners Creek Road (S&Mc 1876). This was an important route in the 1850s, indicated by the '2 mile post' on Toorak Road not far from the hotel (Kearney 1855). The advertisement describes the site as having a fenced-in site with a 70-foot (21 metres) frontage to Toorak Road (*Argus*, 13 January 1855:2). The original two-storey hotel comprised a ground-floor bar, bedroom, three large parlour rooms and a cool cellar. The upper floor contained five bedrooms and a large withdrawing room. The site also comprised a detached kitchen and servants' room, stabling for eight horses, hay loft, fowl house, piggeries, and a 'fine well cropped garden of 1 acre [that] had been cultivated' (*Argus*, 13 January 1855:2).

Thomas Evans acquired the site in 1859 (*Argus*, 24 May 1859:6). Ownership was transferred to George Hallet in 1861, who remained the owner and proprietor of the hotel until 1882 (*Argus*, 17 May 1881:3).

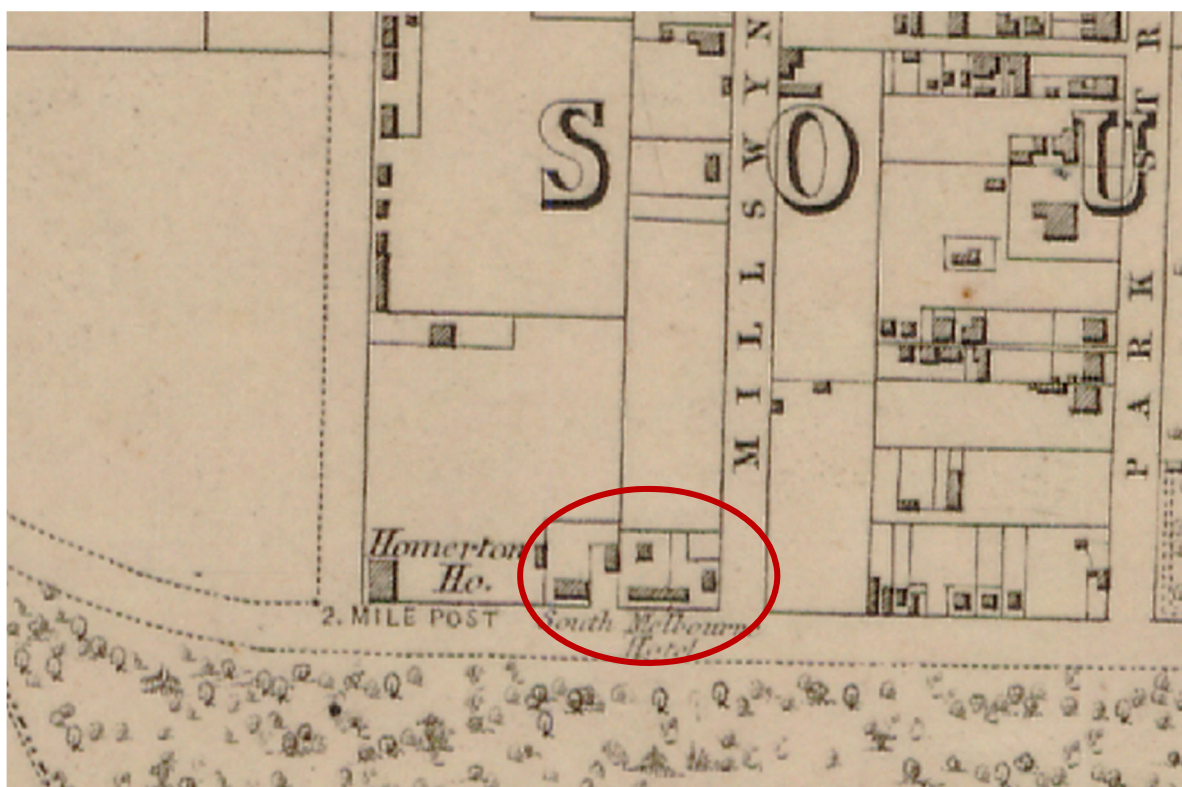


Figure 1. The subject site in 1855, comprising the South Melbourne Hotel built in 1855 (outlined in red). (Source: Kearney 1855)

An Aboriginal man referred to as ‘Mr Mann’ reportedly frequented the South Yarra Club Hotel and the South Melbourne Hotel in the late 1860s. This is most likely a reference to ‘Old Mr Man’ (Mingaragon, Mongarra), who was a Bunurong Elder. He was described as a well-known figure in the area, and ‘generally had a blanket wrapped about him’ (*Herald*, 18 November 1930:6). It was said that he lived in a mia-mia next to an acacia hedge on the grounds of Anne Payne’s estate; and that ‘nothing could induce him to pass the night in the house whenever, during boisterous weather, he was invited to do so’ (*Herald*, 18 November 1930:6). Anne Payne was a sister of TB Payne, who owned the Maritimo estate. There were a number of Aboriginal camps in the general area until the mid to late 1860s.

In 1872 Crown Allotment 15 was surveyed and subdivided by Frederick Farrell (Vale 1872). The subdivision plan shows a squarish form building with what appears to be a verandah (Figure 2). Hope Street first appears in the Melbourne directory in 1876 and was then known as William Street (S&Mc 1876). Gardiners Creek Road was renamed Toorak Road by 1876 (S&Mc 1876, 1877).

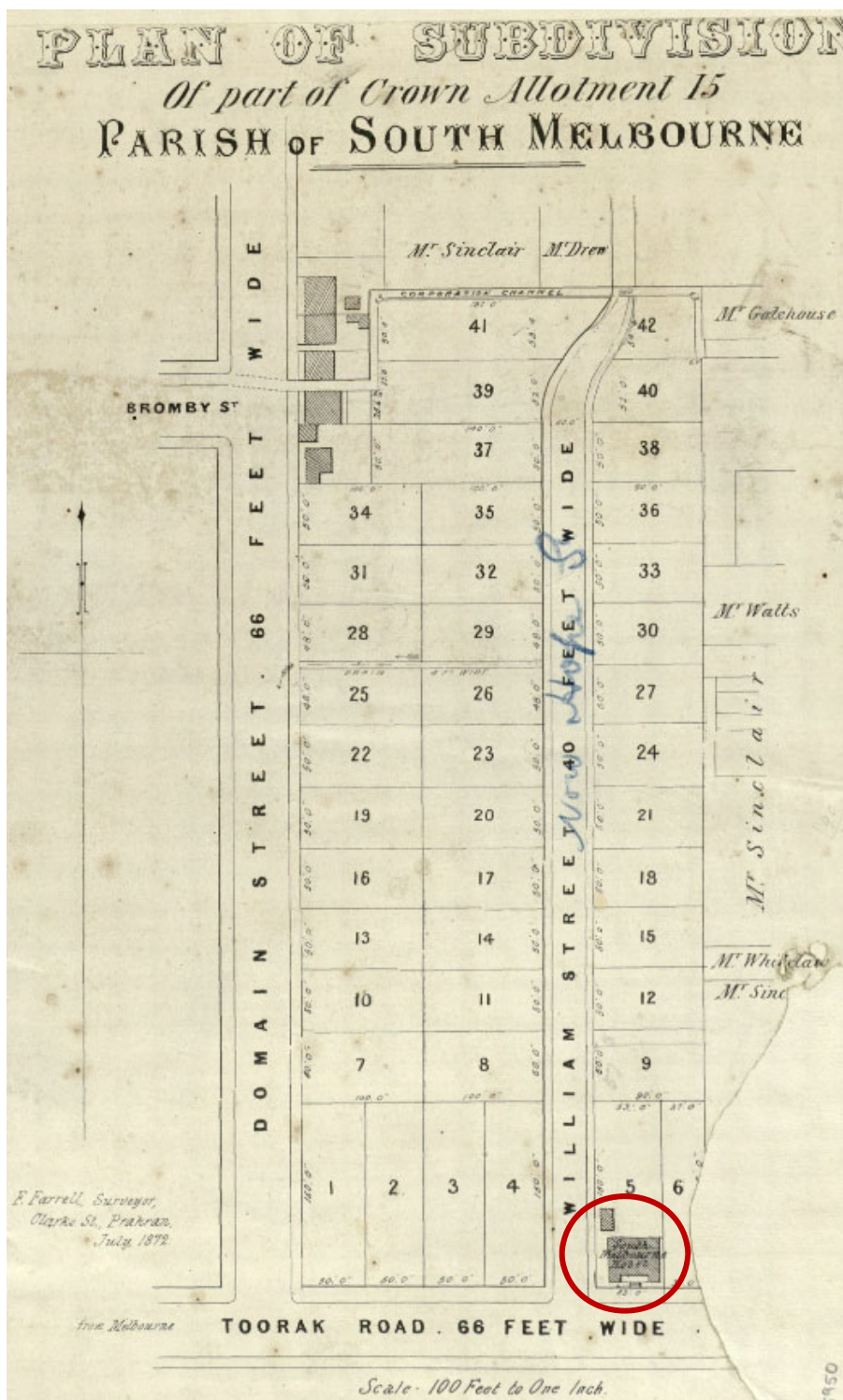


Figure 2. Subdivision of Crown Allotment 15, Parish of South Melbourne, showing the footprint of the South Melbourne Hotel in 1872 (outlined in red). (Source: Vale 1872, State Library Victoria)

In 1881 the hotel premises, as well as furniture, fixtures and effects, were put up for auction and sold for £1100 (*Argus*, 17 May 1881:3; *Age*, 18 July 1881:2). The auction advertisement describes the building as having 12 rooms and a kitchen (*Argus*, 17 May 1881:3). In 1882 tenders were let for alterations and additions to the building and were undertaken by Alexander Davidson and Co, architects (*Argus*, 13 May 1882:15). It is possible that the ground-level verandah was filled in during these alterations, bringing the façade of the building to the Toorak Road boundary. The early façade originally had a central door with

a window on either side and a second door at the easternmost end. It is possible that the c1855 building's roof and external walls were retained during these works.

Tenders were also let for the construction of a double-storey residence 'in connection with the Hotel' in 1882 (*Argus*, 25 May 1882:3 as cited in Lewis 2011, record no 28370). This structure was built on the narrow strip of land between Hope Street and the western elevation of the hotel (MMBW 896, 1896; *Argus*, 25 May 1882:3 as cited in Lewis 2011 record no 28370).

The building was renamed the Fawkner Club Hotel in 1887 (*Argus*, 4 October 1887:7). The owner, Butler Hill Williams died in 1888 and the hotel was put up for sale that year (*Argus*, 1 June 1888:1).

In 1889 a five-roomed brick dwelling was built at the rear of the hotel by C Brown, though this is no longer extant (*Age*, 5 June 1889:7; 5 October 1912:3).

The MMBW detail plan of 1896 shows the hotel building and adjoining residence, then numbered 218 and 220 Toorak Road West. There are outbuildings and a detached structure to the rear of the hotel building and a trough located in front of the building, on Toorak Road (Figure 3). Horse troughs were a common feature outside hotels up until the 1920s and 1930s.

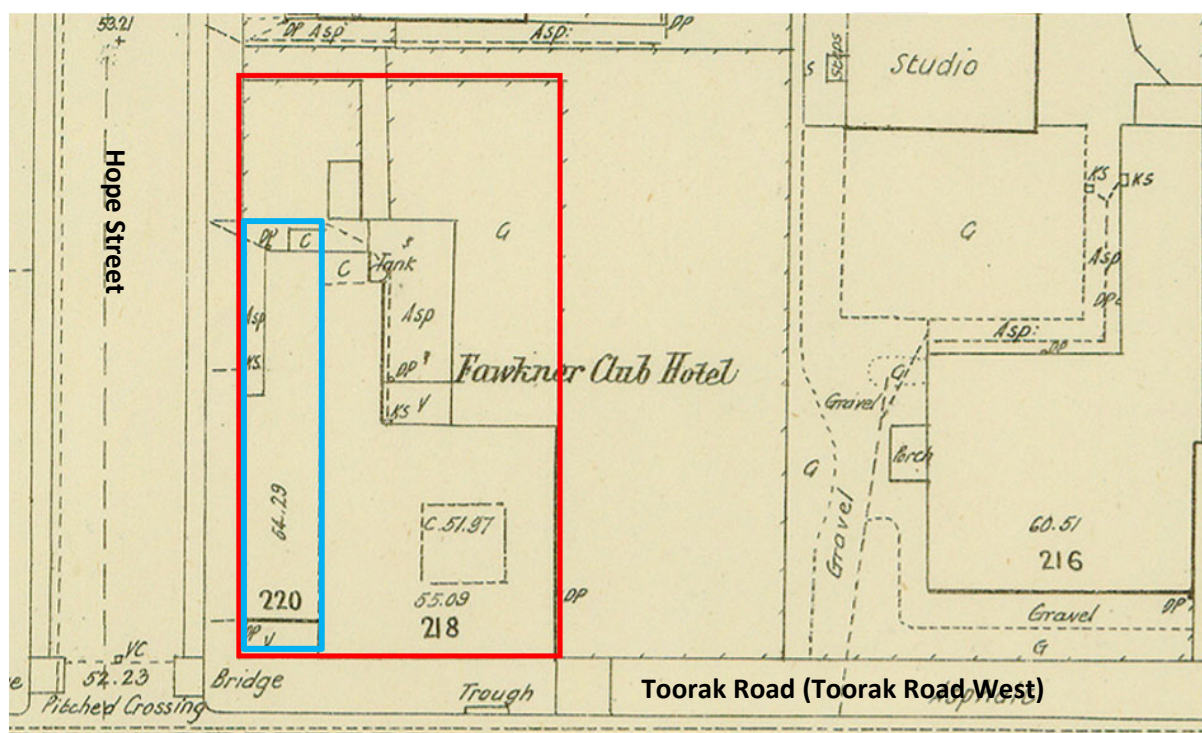


Figure 3. Extract from Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works detail plan 896, 897 and 898, dated 1896 showing the subject site (facing Toorak Road to the south) outlined in red, the blue outline indicates the attached two-storey residence. (Source: State Library Victoria)

The Fawkner Club Hotel provided accommodation from the early twentieth century into the 1930s (*Argus*, 28 January 1903:1; *Referee*, 24 August 1932:12). Thomas Monahan owned the hotel from the late 1880s until his death in 1912. Irish-born Monahan was a prominent landowner and publican in Melbourne. As well as the Fawkner Club Hotel, he owned the Nissen's Exchange Hotel, Melbourne, and the London Hotel and Bay View Hotel in Port Melbourne (*Age*, 17 October 1912:2).

The Fawkner Club Hotel was one of many hotels developed in Melbourne in the 1920s and 1930s in response to changing liquor licensing regulations. The new laws required that hotel owners provide

adequate accommodation and facilities to the public to retain a liquor license. Many Victorian-era hotels were modified and upgraded as a result (Context and GJM 2020:1507).

In 1925 alterations and additions were made to the hotel under the direction of D'Ebro, McKenzie and Meldrum architects (Figure 4) (*Age*, 1 May 1925:20). These works saw the unification of the residence and hotel as one structure via the removal of internal walls and insertion of new openings between the hotel and former residence buildings to facilitate internal access. Significant internal refurbishment was undertaken to improve the facilities and convert the two-storey residential structure into a bar and bottle shop. The inclusion of an attached bottle-shop was a relatively unusual addition for a suburban hotel. It was not until liquor laws were liberalised in the late 1960s to mid-1980s that bottle shops, including those adjacent to hotels (with the stipulated separate entrance door), became common (Taylor 2019).

Modifications to the external façades sought to visually unify the buildings. A splayed corner entrance was added at ground level only. This gave the building an appearance more consistent with the Victorian 'corner pub' typology. However, the overhanging verandah balcony on the first floor remained an indicator of the original separation of the two structures and the residential use of this form.

New window openings were made to create a more regular rhythm to both façades. At the southwestern corner, fronting Toorak Road, a short wide tracery window was added. A new window was created next to the door mid-way along the western façade. What looks to have been an earlier window (facing Hope Street in room labelled 'Liquor Store' on Figure 4) may have been filled in. The external surfaces of the hotel and residence were re-rendered and re-painted. Hood mould and moulded string course detailing was continued along Hope Street (City of Melbourne building plans, PROV VPRS 11200/P/1).

A substantial kitchen and store, crossing and cart dock were built at the rear of the hotel and former residence, along the northern boundary of the allotment (Figure 4) (*Age*, 1 May 1925:20).

In 1956 the Hotel was addressed 52W Toorak Road (*Age*, 24 October 1956:11).

The Ress family purchased the subject site in 1981 with plans to open an exclusive restaurant in the former hotel residence (*Age*, 29 May 1981:27). Between 1982 and 1983 the Ress family carried out substantial works to redevelop and redecorate the Fawkner Club Hotel, at a cost of \$250,000 (*Age*, 29 May 1984:27; MBAI 1982, 1983). The extensive refurbishment removed much of the internal Victorian detailing, leaving only 'the sloping ceiling and two timber trusses' intact (*Age*, 29 May 1981:27). A large skylight was added as part of these works. Run by Leon Ress, the restaurant and cocktail bar, Tiffany's on the Park, opened in 1984 in the former residence, separate to the Fawkner Club Hotel. The restaurant quickly became known as a stylish and popular eatery and a wedding venue (*Age*, 29 May 1981:27; *Age*, 20 October 1991:22).

The Fawkner Club Hotel was a popular venue for young people and public servants during the 1980s (*Age*, 22 April 1980:24). From 1986 it became known as the Fawkner Club Bistro, and later the Fawkner Bistro and Bar, then the Fawkner Club (*Age*, 28 October 1986:36). In the late 1980s modifications were made at ground level to the former hotel building façade on Toorak Road. These works involved the insertion of a new window opening on the western end of the façade (*Age*, 4 July 1998:30) and lowering of sill heights along this façade. These changes gave the façade a more symmetrical appearance.

The Ress family figured strongly in Melbourne's hospitality industry. As well as Tiffany's on the Park, the family owned and operated the Royal Mail Hotel, Diamond Creek; the Mitre Tavern, Melbourne; the Melbourne Cricket Ground Hotel in Jolimont; and the Ress-Astoria and the Ress-Oriental, both in Collins Street in Melbourne. The family is said to have opened the first supper club in Melbourne (the Astoria), and to have been the first to put tables and chairs on the pavement (the Oriental) and to operate a combined speciality restaurant cocktail bar and discotheque (Rib Room) (*Age*, 29 May 1981:27).