

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Moorakyne/Stonington Precinct, Malvern (HO182)



Figure 1. Moorakyne Avenue, Malvern (GJM Heritage, March 2021).

DATE: June 2021

Place type: Residential Precinct	Architect: Various
Construction Date: 1925 - early 1950s	Builder: Various

Historical Context Summary

The City of Stonnington stands on the Traditional Lands of the Woi wurrung and Boon Wurrung Peoples of the East Kulin Nations. Archaeologists believe that Aboriginal People have been in Victoria for more than 30,000 years. Throughout this long history their relationship with the landscape (where and how they live) has changed according to factors such as climate change, resource availability, and cultural change (Context 2006:10).

The first European settler in the Malvern district was John Gardiner in 1835, a pastoralist from New South Wales who was one of the first overlanders to Port Phillip. He pastured his stock near the junction of Gardiner’s Creek and the Yarra River and is the namesake of Gardiner’s Creek, Gardiner’s Creek Road (now Toorak Road) and both the locality and the Shire of Gardiner (before they were re-named Malvern). The first recorded use of the name Malvern was in January 1854, when barrister Charles B. G. Skinner named his hotel on the corner of Malvern and Glenferrie roads the ‘Malvern Hill’ after a district in England. The name for the Shire of Malvern was derived from Malvern Hill Estate, a private subdivision in the area dating to 1856 (City of Stonnington [CoS]; Context 2006:34).

The first land sales in the area were held in 1854 and most original Crown grantees subdivided their allotments for resale (Context 2006:41; 2009:4). Gardiner’s Road District was proclaimed in 1856 before Gardiner Shire was formed in 1871, which was renamed Malvern Shire in 1878 (CoS). The municipal boundary comprised the current localities of Malvern (previously Gardiner), Malvern East, Glen Iris (south of Gardiners Creek), Kooyong, Armadale (east of Kooyong Road), Toorak (east of Kooyong Road) and Chadstone (west of Warrigal Road). Early directories listed Malvern and Malvern East as the one locality, until 1910.

The former Malvern Shire saw slow population growth to 1881, by which time it totalled just under 2,000 people (Victorian Places). In 1879, the Oakleigh Railway Line was opened along the southern extent of the municipality, through Malvern, Armadale, Toorak and Hawksburn to join the existing line at South Yarra. The arrival of the Oakleigh railway coincided with the start of the land boom, which resulted in considerable urban growth. In the 1880s the district comprised substantial residences on large allotments, as well as pastoral and agricultural holdings (including market gardens and orchards) and commercial development (Context 2006:41, 65-6). During the 1880s boom period, the municipality saw a dramatic increase in population, quadrupling to approximately 8,000 by 1891, and steadily increasing to 10,000 by 1901 (Victorian Places). In the 1890s a number of timber houses were built in Malvern as an economy measure, but some residents complained that wooden houses would degenerate into slums. Concern about this development led to a slum abolition movement and subsequently, c1912, Malvern Council began to declare brick areas, where timber houses were not permitted. By 1916 the Council had also fixed a minimum area for individual housing allotments at 6000 square feet, with minimum frontages of fifty feet (Context 2006:128).

The railway line along the northern extent of the municipality was established in 1890 through the Glen Iris Valley from Burnley. Stations were established at Heyington, Kooyong, Tooronga, Gardiner, Glen Iris and Darling, however, expected residential development in their vicinity stalled during the 1890s following the economic collapse (Context 2006:66). The 1893 *Australian Handbook* (as cited in Victorian Places) described Malvern as ‘an elevated residential suburb’, served by a line of omnibuses from Prahran, with many leading merchants and professional men living in the area in pleasantly situated ‘dwellings of a superior class’. The entry noted that a number of notable mansions had been erected by this date, and that the market gardens and orchards were ‘steadily being reduced, and cut up into building allotments, on which [were] being erected

many handsome villas and business establishments' (Victorian Places). The municipality saw rapid development and urbanisation from 1900 and it was declared a Borough and then a Town in 1901. In 1911 the municipality was declared a City, with a residential population of 16,000 (Context 2006:86; Victorian Places).

The Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust was established in 1908, with electric tramlines opening along High Street in 1910-14, Glenferrie Road in 1910-13, to the south along Wattletree Road in 1910-12, and Malvern Road in 1915. The arrival of the tramlines further drove the development of commercial centres in the immediate vicinity and residential development beyond. New train stations were built at Armadale, Hawksburn, Malvern and Toorak between 1908 and 1918, and at Malvern East in 1929 (Context 2006:70-2, 113; Victorian Places).

Residential development during the early twentieth century generally occurred on newly subdivided estates or on nineteenth century subdivisions that had remained partly or wholly undeveloped during the 1890s depression (Context 2009:5). In 1912 it was reported that 800 houses a year were being built in the (by then) City of Malvern, which boasted 'a progress unprecedented by any other suburb' (Context 2009:128). In the decade between 1911 and 1921 the population in the City of Malvern doubled, from 16,000 to 32,000 residents, and then increased steadily to 43,000 by 1933 (Victorian Places). This population growth saw development spread to the Glen Iris Valley and the outer reaches of the City, in Malvern East. The housing stock in this eastern part of the municipality was more characteristically uniform and unadorned in comparison to housing in Malvern. Kooyong's development was substantially completed by the end of the 1920s (Context 2006:128, 131).

By 1946 the Australian Blue Book (as cited in Victorian Places) stated that Malvern was one of the 'leading residential suburbs of the Metropolis'. It comprised the substantial homes of many of Melbourne's leading citizens, in what was termed 'The Garden City' due to the number of parks and public gardens. Development in the City of Malvern steadied from the 1930s, with the population averaging 45,000 until the 1990s (Victorian Places). The City of Malvern amalgamated with the City of Prahran in 1994, to form the City of Stonnington.

Precinct History Summary

[The following history is based on Bryce Raworth's, citation for HO182 Moorakyne & Stonington Precinct, 2000, (direct quotes in italics) with additional information as cited].

Early subdivision

Prior to the first land sales in 1840, pastoralists occupied what was to become the District of Gardiner. The first pastoralist was John Gardiner, after whom the district was named, who arrived in 1836. When the area was first surveyed it was divided into allotments suitable for gardens, orchards and farms. In 1856 the Gardiner Road District was proclaimed, extending from Gardiners Creek to Kooyong, Dandenong and Warrigal roads.

Crown Allotment 24, bound by Glenferrie Road, Malvern Road, Toorak Road and extending eastwards to the current Henderson Avenue, was sold at the second round of Crown land sales in the area in 1849. The lot was purchased by Robert A Balbirnie (of 'Balmerino', Toorak Road), who subdivided the land.

Three of the subdivided allotments were sold to Peter Cousin and his son James. Peter Cousin purchased his allotment in 1851 and James Cousin purchased the adjacent allotments in 1859. Market gardener George Wratten purchased the fourth allotment which is now sited between Hamilton Road and Mayfield Avenue. The ten-acre allotment at the corner of Toorak Road became the site of William Phillpot's estate Rosehill. Rosehill house was later demolished, making way for The Great Toorak Estate subdivision in the late 1880s, which formed Chesterfield and Mayfield avenues (Raworth 1998:35).



The allotment extending to the corner of Malvern Road was subdivided into smaller lots and sold to various purchasers. Most of these small allotments became the property of William Woodmason in the 1860s. The Woodmason family were successful market gardeners and dairy farmers, with substantial land holdings throughout the district. At the corner of Glenferrie Road, Woodmason cultivated a highly successful market garden. He was Shire President and a long serving member of the Malvern Council. On his death in 1892, his son, William James Woodmason, took over the dairy and his father's prize-winning jersey herd. Woodmason became a breeder of pure breed jersey cattle and the herd was noted as one of the best in Victoria, winning several championships at the Royal Melbourne Show. Woodmason's Melrose Dairy was established at the corner of Glenferrie and Malvern Roads. Woodmason Estate was subdivided in the 1920s (Raworth 1998:35).

Victorian development and Interwar subdivision

The houses in the Moorakyne/Stonington Precinct were constructed on the subdivisions of three Victorian-period estates – Kooringa, Moorakyne and Stonington (Figure 2). Imposing mansions were built on these three large Glenferrie Road estates in the boom years of the late 1880s and were retained on reduced allotments when subdivision of the estates occurred in the interwar period.

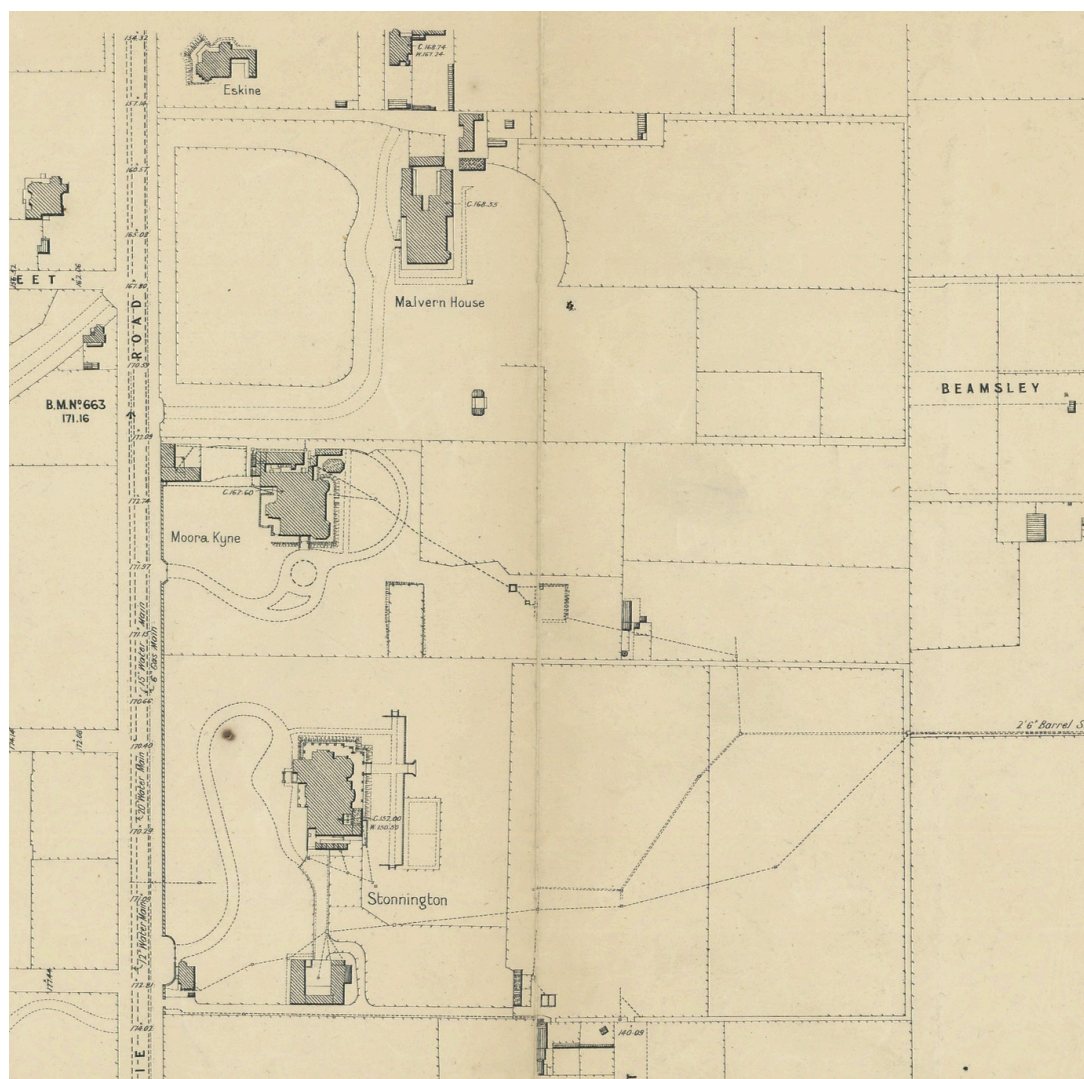


Figure 2. The precinct area in 1902. Evident is Kooringa (then named Malvern House), Moora Kyne and Stonington (MMBW Plan No. 59, dated 1902).



Kooringa

George Wratten and the Cousin family used their land as a market garden and orchard. In 1881 Wratten sold his land to merchant Robert Harper who built a five-room brick house with stables, orchard and market garden, with an entrance from Glenferrie Road. Within a year the property was sold to pastoralist Suetonius Henry Officer. It appears that Officer died in 1883 and the property was then occupied by Robert Officer, presumably Sir Robert, the father of Suetonius. On the site, an imposing mansion was built to the design of noted architect Francis Maloney White, for Mrs S. H. Officer. By 1885 Mary Officer is rated as the owner of 13 acres with a brick house of 30 rooms. The Officer family owned the estate until 1890 when it was sold to landboomer, Joseph Bartlett Davies, who named the house Glenbervie. From 1895 to 1901, Davies leased the property to George Stevenson, one of the pioneers in the soft-goods trade in Australia. The house was then known as Malvern House.

In 1907 Davies sold the property to pastoralist and racehorse breeder, Alexander Creswick who renamed the property Yarrien. The Creswicks lived at Yarrien until 1918 when the property was sold to sisters, Isabel and Robina Hamilton. At that time Isabel was Principal and Robina a teacher, at Toorak College, located in Douglas Street, Toorak. A third sister Barbara was superintendent of the boarding house. It was decided that the grounds at Douglas Street were too small, and in 1919 the school relocated to Yarrien in Glenferrie Road. Yarrien was used to accommodate the boarders and as the private quarters of the Hamilton sisters. By 1920, a hockey field extended along the Glenferrie Road frontage. It appears that within a few years, Essington Lewis, chairman of BHP, purchased Yarrien for use as a private home and renamed the property Kooringa.

Interwar subdivision - The College and Moorakyne Heights Estate

In 1925 part of Kooringa estate, along with part of the adjacent Moorakyne estate, was subdivided into twenty-eight residential allotments with frontages to the east side of Wilks Avenue, Henderson Avenue and the corner of Beamsley Street. The College and Moorakyne Heights Estate was auctioned in November 1925 (Figure 3) and advertised as being:

Situate[d] on the crest of the Malvern Heights, commanding extensive picturesque views of the distant Dandenong Ranges and intervening valleys. This elevated locality was selected ... as the ideal residential position, and consequently was built upon by such well-known real estate authorities as Sir John Grice, Messrs. Officer, Wagner and Davies.... and it is the subdivision of parts of these famous homes that throws open to the public these elevated and select allotments (College and Moorakyne Heights Estate subdivision plan, 28 November 1925, cited in Raworth 2000:4).

At the same time, Hamilton Road was also created, dividing the estate from Glenferrie Road to Wilks Avenue. Toorak College relocated to Lansell Road and Kooringa mansion was retained on a reduced allotment on the north side of Hamilton Road. In 1942, when Essington Lewis still owned Kooringa, the mansion was occupied by Wesley College, when the school's St Kilda Road buildings were taken over by the army. Later, Kooringa became the Lady Dugan Red Cross Home. The mansion was demolished in the 1970s [forming] Hamilton Close.

Saturday, Nov. 28, 1925

Position

THESE Estates are Situate on the Crest of the Malvern Heights, commanding Extensive Picturesque Panoramic Views of the distant Dandenong Ranges and intervening valleys. This Elevated Locality was selected in the early days of Melbourne as the Ideal Residential Position, and consequently was built upon by such well-known real estate authorities as Sir John Grice, Messrs. Officer, Wagner, and Davies.

It adjoins the State Government House, and it is the Subdivision of parts of these famous homes that throws open to the public these elevated and select Allotments.

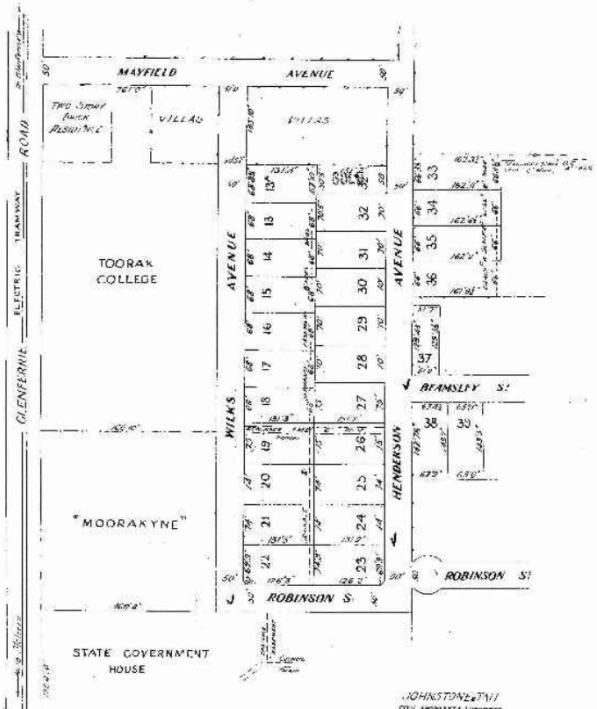


Figure 3. College & Moorakynne Heights Estate subdivision plan, dated 28 Nov 1925 (SHC, MH736).



Figure 4. House at 1 Henderson Avenue, photo dated c1935 (SHC, MP5288).



Figure 5. Photo dated c1935, looking north at 3-9 Henderson Avenue (SHC, MP5286).





Figure 6. House at 6 Wilks Avenue, photo dated c1935 (SHC, MP5287).

Moorakyne

The allotment owned by James Cousin changed hands several times, until it was purchased by Joseph Davies in 1878. The land was finally sold to merchant John Grice, who commissioned London-born architect Charles D'Ebro to design a mansion of grand proportions with a frontage to Glenferrie Road. In 1889 builder Stephen Armstrong was awarded D'Ebro's tender to build the mansion at a cost of £18,888. Grice named the house Moorakyne.

John Grice had been admitted to the bar in 1872, but joined his family's firm of Grice, Sumner & Co. He joined the National Bank in 1887 and became its Chairman in 1906. Grice was Chairman of Directors for many major Australian companies and became Vice Chancellor of the University of Melbourne in 1918. His services to the war effort earned him a knighthood in 1917.

In 1901 Grice sold Moorakyne to Anthony Edwin Bowes Kelly. Kelly had been living with his family at Waiora in Glenferrie Road since 1888. Bowes Kelly made his first fortune as a shareholder in BHP and his second in the Mount Lyell copper mine in Tasmania. For at least four decades Bowes Kelly enhanced Australian mining and manufacturing. He was a director of BHP for 45 years, a director of several banks and companies and a member of Malvern Shire Council, 1892-96.

Interwar subdivision - Moorakyne Estate

In 1930, five years after part of the Moorakyne estate had been sold and subdivided to form Wilks Avenue (as part of The College and Moorakyne Heights Estate), Kelly died. The family lived at Moorakyne until a decision was made to sell the estate. By 1932 no buyer could be found and the estate was subdivided into twenty residential allotments and Moorakyne Avenue was created, with a bend in the road to allow retention of the mansion (Figure 7). In December 1932, the Moorakyne Estate was advertised as:

... one of the finest in the district, gently sloping towards the east, commanding extensive views from many points to the mountains (Moorakyne subdivision plan and sale notice, 3 December 1932, cited in Raworth 2000:6).

In July 1933, The Argus noted that the:

Moorakyne Estate ... was placed on the market only a few months ago, yet already half a dozen houses have been started. Leading Melbourne architects designed most of them and when complete they should form a most interesting group example of modern domestic architecture (Argus, 13 July 1933:5).

Moorakyne mansion, which was retained on lot 3 of the estate on the north side of Moorakyne Avenue, was described as 'one of the finest in the State, ... of noble design ... with ornamental cement finish' (Sun, 28 April 1936). Despite the successful sale of the allotments, the mansion remained unsold and in April 1936 the building was demolished.

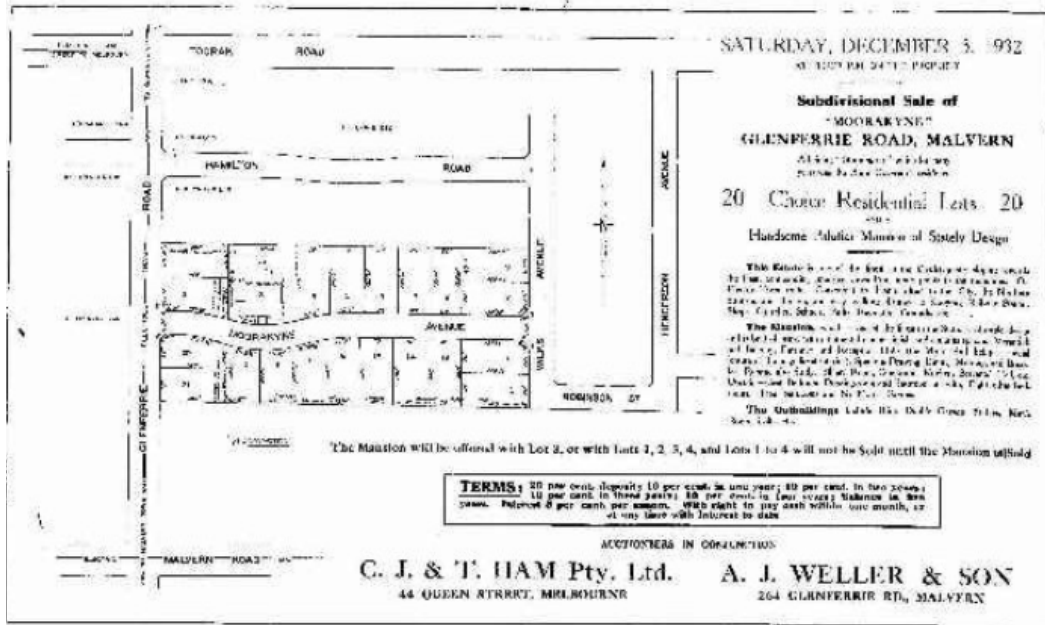


Figure 7. Moorakyne Estate subdivision plan, dated December 1932 (SHC, MH634).

Stonington

Peter Cousin had purchased 20 acres of Balbirnie's land in Glenferrie Road in 1851, two years after his arrival from Scotland. The land was divided between his wife and his sons, Peter and James. By 1882 'fruiterer' Peter Cousin was the owner of a six-roomed weatherboard house with 'orchard, garden and paddock over nine acres on Malvern Hill' (Sturrock 1990:6). In that year, Cousin provided accommodation for Major James Barker, the Territorial Commander of the Salvation Army, and his wife Alice. During their nine month stay in Malvern many prayer meetings were conducted in Cousin's barn, the 'Hallelujah barn', as it came to be called in early issues of the Salvation Army paper 'War Cry'. The Cousin property was also the site of the commissioning of the first Australian Salvation Army Officer.

In June 1886, Peter Cousin sold his property to John Wagner, a founding partner with AW Robertson of the Victorian branch of Cobb and Co. Wagner had gained his wealth in carrying, gold mining, manufacturing and real estate. Wagner commissioned leading architect, Charles D'Ebro, the same architect Grice had chosen for Moorakyne, and in 1890 an imposing mansion of 40 rooms was built by the same builder, Stephen Armstrong. The residence was named Stonington, after Stonington, Connecticut, in the USA, the birthplace of Wagner's wife Mary. John Wagner lived with his family at Stonington until his death in 1901. The Wagner estate consisted of the mansion, stables and gatehouse, all of which survive today. The long curved driveway led from the massive iron gates, down to the porte-cochere, where carriages stopped.

When the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia was located in Melbourne, the Governor General resided in the State Government House. Following John Wagner's death, Stonington became the Vice-Regal residence for the Governor of Victoria. Between 1901 and 1931 seven governors occupied Stonington – Sir Arthur Sydenham Clarke, Sir Reginald Talbot, Sir Thomas Gibson Carmichael, Sir John Fuller, Sir Arthur Lyulph Stanley, George Edward Rous the Earl of Stradbroke, and Arthur Herbert Tennyson – Lord Somers.

Following the departure of the last Governor in 1931, Stonington's long association with education began. St Margaret's School used the property until 1938, when the school moved to Berwick. For the next few years, the mansion was used as an after-care centre for infantile paralysis patients and following the outbreak of the Second World War, Stonington was used as a convalescent hospital for the Australian Red Cross Society. From 1953-1956, the Health Department occupied the site as an administrative centre. Since 1957, Stonington has played an important role in Tertiary Education in Victoria. It was the home of the Toorak Teachers' College from 1957 to 1973 and the State College of Victoria, Toorak Campus from 1973 to 1992. Since 1992, Deakin University has occupied the site.

Interwar subdivision - Stonington Fields Estate

During St Margaret's occupancy of Stonington, land surrounding the mansion was subdivided (the mansion remains adjacent to the precinct; VHR H1608, HO40). In April 1935, a sale was held of the Stonington Fields Estate, when twenty-six 'choice residential lots' were created in an extension of Wilks Avenue, the south side of Robinson Street and in the present Somers Avenue (Figure 8). The western end of Somers Avenue (named for Lord Somers) had been created in 1913, and was originally called State Street, then Wagner Street.

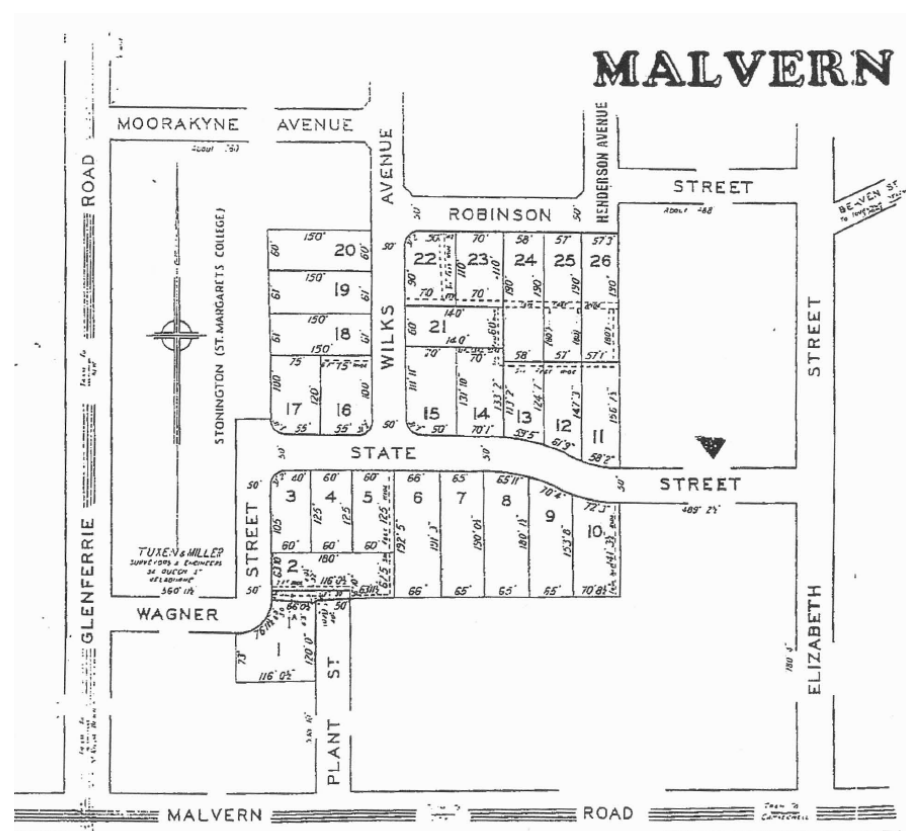


Figure 8. Detail of Stonington Fields Estate, Malvern, auction notice, dated 6 April 1935 (Raworth 2000:8).

Interwar development within Moorakynne/Stonington Precinct

The streets in the Moorakynne/Stonington Precinct, including Wilks Avenue, Henderson Avenue, Hamilton Road, Moorakynne Avenue and an extension of Somers Avenue (formerly Wagner Street and State Street) were all formed as part of the subdivision of the Victorian estates, and a substantial number of houses were constructed in the Interwar period. The majority date from the 1930s with a smaller proportion dating from the 1940s and early 1950s (Figure 9 – Figure 10).

The area attracted the upper middle classes and many houses, and some maisonettes, were designed by Melbourne's leading architects. Houses demonstrate a diversity of character and a range of architectural

styles, in particular the Old English and Georgian Revival styles. Two Interwar houses located adjacent to the precinct, are particularly fine examples of their type – Katanga, 372 Glenferrie Road (HO41; VHR HO935) and 16 Somers Avenue (HO334).

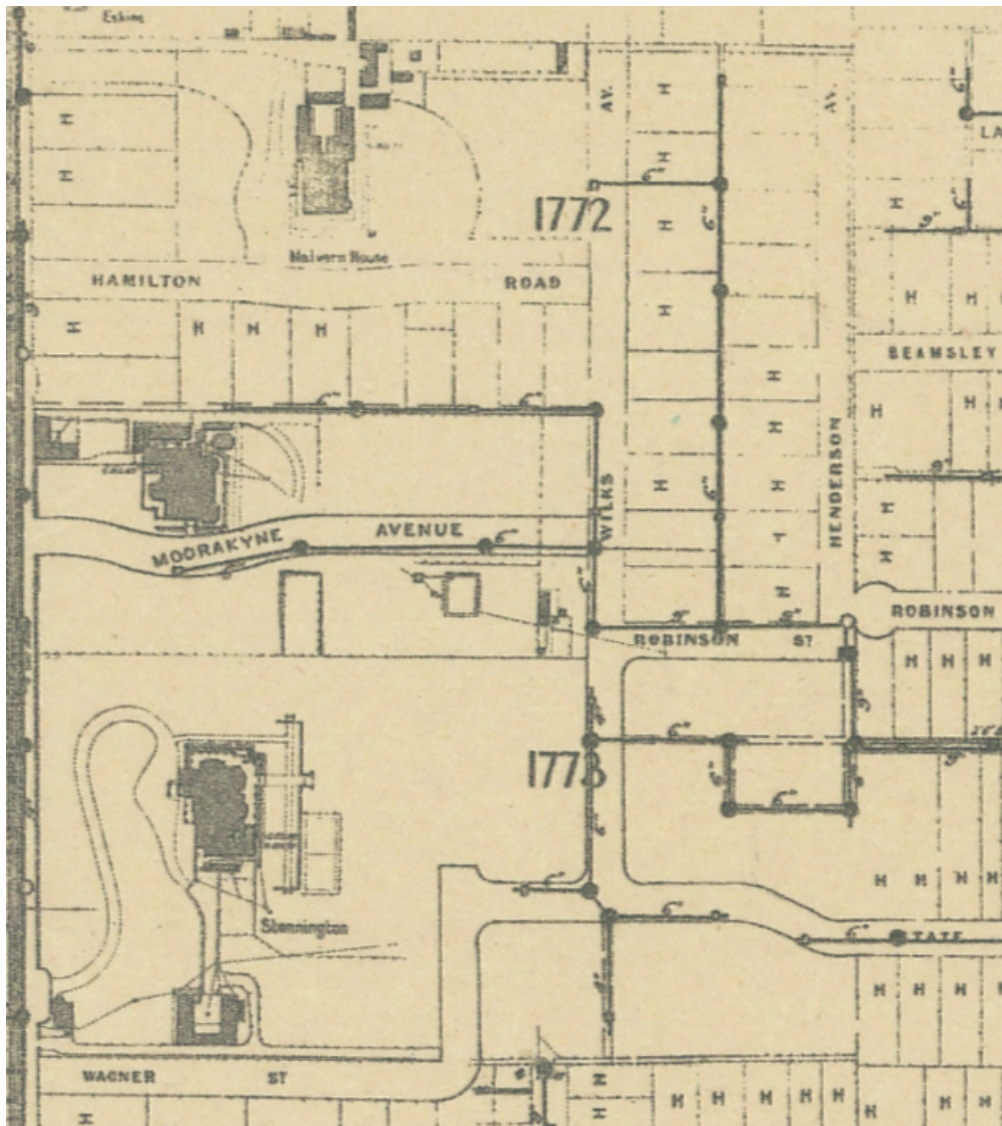


Figure 9. Development of the precinct area by c1933 (prior to the demolition of Moorakayne mansion in 1936) (MMBW Plan NO. 59, dated c1933-c1950).



Figure 10. Development evident within the precinct (boundary in blue) by 1945. Stonington is evident bottom left of the image (areas shaded green indicate places with individual heritage overlays) (Melbourne Uni map collection, Melbourne 1945 photo-map, 849 A3C, dated 1945).

Description Summary

The Moorakayne/Stonington Precinct, Malvern is situated on an elevated and undulating site to the east of Glenferrie Road between Toorak and Malvern Roads, with Glenferrie Road forming the western boundary. The precinct includes the length of the southern side of Hamilton Road, the entirety of Moorakayne Avenue, large sections of Wilks Avenue and Henderson Avenue, small sections of Somers Avenue and Robinson Road, and a number of properties on the east side of Glenferrie Road.

The Moorakayne/Stonington Precinct is a residential precinct containing a large collection of substantial Interwar houses. The streetscapes date largely from the 1930s with a small number of buildings dating from the 1940s and early 1950s. The dominant building form is two-storey detached houses, either Old English or Georgian Revival in style.

Non-contributory buildings in the precinct include a small number of heavily altered interwar houses and houses constructed from the 1960s onwards.

A number of houses within the precinct can be attributed to leading Melbourne architects. These include:

- Maisonettes, 1-3 Moorakynne Avenue: Arthur W Plaisted (c1941) (*Building*, 24 October 1941:20-21)
- House, 11 Moorakynne Avenue: Arnaud E Wright (1934) (SHC MB5119)
- Elvada Flats, 358 Glenferrie Road (corner Moorakynne Avenue): Leslie Reed (1933) (*Herald*, 15 Nov 1933:20)
- Duplex, 2C & 2D Wilks Avenue – A C Leith & Bartlett, 1940 (SHC MH57028)
- House, 6 Wilks Avenue – P A Jenkin (*Australian Home Beautiful*, 2 May 1932; photo SHC MH57030)
- House, 8 Wilks Avenue – Arthur & Hugh Peck (1933) (*Australian Home Beautiful*, October 1933 as recorded in Lewis (1992))
- Houses, 10 & 11 Wilks Avenue – J F W Ballantyne (c1931) (*Australian Home Beautiful*, April 1931 as recorded in Lewis (1992))
- House, 12 Wilks Avenue - Charles Hollinshed (*Australian Home Beautiful*, November 1932 as recorded in Lewis (1992))
- House, 13 Wilks Avenue – Charles Hollinshed (*Argus*, 12 Nov 1949:16)
- House, 3 Henderson Avenue – Cowper, Murphy & Appleford (*Australian Home Beautiful*, October 1933 as recorded in Lewis (1992))
- 9 Henderson Avenue – Robert B Hamilton (1930) (SHC Building Plans MB5027)
- 15 Henderson Avenue – Ballantyne & Wilson (1935) (*Herald*, 30 Oct 1935:12)
- 23 Henderson Avenue – Barney & Kemp (1936) (*Australian Home Beautiful*, May 1936 as recorded in Lewis (1992))
- 4 Hamilton Road – Oakley & Parkes (1928) (SHC Building Plans MB4546)
- 6-8 Hamilton Road – Godfrey & Spowers (1928) (SHC Building Plans MB4484).

Three places with individual Heritage Overlays are located at or near the boundaries of the precinct, and include:

- Stonington, 336 Glenferrie Road (HO40) (VHR H1608)
- Katanga, 372 Glenferrie Road (HO41) (VHR H0935)
- 16 Somers Avenue (HO334).

Key Features

- Large Interwar houses, predominantly Old English and Georgian Revival in style
- Predominantly two-storey residences
- Predominantly gable roof forms with some hipped roof forms
- Steep roof pitches with prominent front gables
- Terracotta tile-clad or shingle-clad roofs
- Timber-lined eaves, some battened for ventilation
- Eaveless gable ends



- Prominent tall clinker brick or rendered chimneys which often project beyond the face of the wall
- Clinker brick or rendered brick walls
- A variety of detailing including brick patterning to facades with contrasting Roman and coloured bricks and half timbering to gable ends
- Multi-paned double-hung windows
- Window shutters
- Consistent front setbacks within streetscapes
- Early or original low brick front fences with some low stone walls
- Mature gardens with established trees
- Early or original brick garages often incorporated into the house design
- Predominantly concrete-paved roads
- Mature street trees including plantings of Spanish Oak (*Quercus palustris*) on Glenferrie Road and Wilks Avenue; Dutch Elm (*Ulmus x hollandica*) on Glenferrie Road; Liquid Amber (*Liquidamber styraciflua*) on Hamilton Road and Moorakyne Avenue; Crabapple (*Malus ioenis*) on Henderson Avenue; Ash (*Fraxinus angustifolia*) on Mayfield Avenue and Wilks Avenue; and London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) on Somers Avenue and Wilks Avenue.

References

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J B Cooper, *The History of Malvern, From its First Settlement to a City*, Melbourne, 1935.

College and Moorakyne Heights Estate subdivision plan, dated 28 November 1925, via Stonnington History Centre (Ref No. MH736) and Raworth (2000:4).

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Plan No 59 Malvern, dated 1902 & c1933.

Melbourne University, online map collection, 'Melbourne 1945 photo-map'.

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