

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Nullagai, 429 Glenferrie Road, Malvern (HO313)



Figure 1. 429 Glenferrie Road, Malvern (GJM Heritage, July 2020).

DATE: June 2021

Place type: House	Architect: Eric Beedham
Construction Date: 1927	Builder: C H Quail

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.

Place History Summary

Nullagai, 429 Glenferrie Road, Malvern was constructed on the west side of Glenferrie Road in 1927 on land which had originally been purchased as Crown Allotment 25 by John Sullivan in 1849. The Grosvenor Estate was established at the north-east corner of this allotment in the 1880s, at the junction of Glenferrie and Toorak Roads, and Nullagai was built on land subdivided from the southern extent of this estate. Further subdivision of the estate occurred in 1935 (Foster 1999).

The 12-roomed brick house, with a tennis court, was built for Mr and Mrs A B Sanders to designs by young architect Eric Beedham, who was born in Hobart but had settled in Melbourne by 1927 (Built Heritage). An article about the newly built house, named Nullagai, published in 1928 (*The Australian Home Beautiful*, Nov 1928:12-18) noted that:

Since the cutting up of the old estates much building has gone on here in the last few years, and here are situated some of the most beautiful of Toorak's modern homes, surrounded as they are by lovely gardens in many instances relics from the old places.

The article in *The Australian Home Beautiful* provided a detailed description with external and internal photographs and commented that the house 'has so many excellencies it is impossible to enumerate them all'. This included such thoughtful detailing as hidden fly-wire screens which slid up out of the wall cavity when the top sash was lifted, radiators disguised in decorative oak and cane casings, a sink in the upstairs linen press for tea-making, a dumb waiter and laundry chute (*Age*, 6 May 1928:45).



At the time the house was built, the owner, Algenon Bernard Sanders, was a director of Leviathan Pty Ltd, a company that was established in the 1860s as Sanders & Co, by his father Lewis (Louis) Sanders and Abraham Levy. This company founded a large retail emporium known as The Leviathan and constructed a large new city store at the corner of Bourke and Swanston Streets in 1913 (Perfin).

After Algenon's death in 1938, his wife lived at the house until her death in 1954. Nullagai was subsequently purchased by Dr William E Swaney and remained in his ownership until 1989 when the house, then known as Carn Brea, was advertised for sale (*Age*, 6 May 1889:45). Carn Brea was re-advertised for sale in 1994 (*Age*, 27 August 1994:46). Recent aerial photographs indicate that a large addition was constructed at the rear (west) of the house (date not confirmed), removing an earlier section evident in 1945 (Figure 5).

Description Summary

The following description includes detail contained within 'City of Malvern Heritage Study', Lewis & Aitken, 1992.

Nullagai, 429 Glenferrie Road, Malvern is situated on a large property on the west side of Glenferrie Road, between Benson Avenue and Toorak Road. The house is set behind a high fence with deep garden setback from Glenferrie Road, and a tennis court at the rear of the property.

Nullagai is an imposing Old English style house that is of particular note for its large two-storey form with prominent terracotta shingle roof. The roof extends down from the main ridge in a continuous plane over the porte cochere where it curves out to the gutter line. There is a projecting hipped dormer above the porte cochere and a series of gables to the north. The chimneys are a striking feature, rising in simple tapered forms to terracotta chimney pots. The main walls are rendered with feature sections of face brickwork. A window bay to the north of the porte-cochere features half-timbering to the upper-level and face brickwork below. Main windows feature diamond-pattern leaded glazing.

Key Features:

- Old English style house
- Large two storey form
- Rendered brick walls with feature sections of face brickwork
- Prominent gabled and hipped roof forms, clad with terracotta shingles, which curve slightly at the eaves
- Sweeping roof form to front porte cochere with projecting hipped dormer above
- Simple tapered chimneys, with feature bricks, decorative 'S' motif and multiple terracotta chimney pots
- Half-timbering to single upper level window bay with face brickwork below
- Pointed arch-headed openings
- Projecting bay windows
- Diamond-pattern leaded glazing to main windows
- Rear tennis court.

Intactness/Integrity

Nullagai remains highly intact to its period of construction. The place retains a high degree of integrity and legibility as an Interwar Old English style house.

References

Built Heritage, 'Eric C Beedham (1895-1947)' biography, https://www.builtheritage.com.au/dua_beedham.html, accessed August 2020.

Context Pty Ltd, Stonnington Thematic Environmental History, 2006 & 2009 addendum.

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

Foster, D, *Toorak – Melbourne's Most Fashionable Suburb, a history of Toorak east of Kooyong Road 1840-1998*, 1999.

N Lewis & Associates, *City of Malvern Heritage Study*, 1992.

Perfin, 'The Leviathan Ltd', <<https://www.perfins.com.au/OZ-Revenue-Perfins/Victoria-Revenue-ZL-Perfins.html>>, accessed August 2020.

Stonnington History Centre, (SHC), image collection:

- MP678 Aerial photograph 1927
- MP8221 Perspective drawing 1927
- MP746 Photograph of house, c1928.

The Australian Home Beautiful, November 1928, pp 12-18.

The Age, 6 May 1989, p 45 (includes photograph).

The Age, 27 August 1994, p 46 (includes photograph).

Victorian Places, 'Malvern' & 'Malvern East', <http://www.victorianplaces.com.au>.

Historic Images and Plans



Figure 2. Detail of aerial photograph looking south along Glenferrie Road, showing Nullagai (red arrow) possibly nearing completion in 1927. (Source: SHC MP678)



Figure 3. Perspective drawing, 1927. (Source: SHC MP8221)



Figure 4. House soon after completion, c1928. (Source: SHC MP746).



Figure 5. Aerial photograph 1945 (Source: Landata)



Figure 6. The main elevation of the house in 1992 (Lewis 1992 via SHC).