

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Roma, 44 Stanhope Street, Malvern (H0337)



Figure 1. 44 Stanhope Street, Malvern (GJM Heritage, July 2020).

DATE: June 2021

Place type: House	Architect: Unknown
Construction Date: c1886	Builder: John Wright

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

Roma at 44 Stanhope Street, Malvern is one of ten similarly detailed houses which were built on the south side of Stanhope Street, east of Glenferrie Road, at the height of the Melbourne land boom. These include houses at 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 86, 88 and 92 Stanhope Street which were all built between 1886 and 1891 on land purchased by builder John Wright (Malvern Rate Books). Houses at 44-56 Stanhope Street were built on allotments in the Winter's Estate subdivision of 1881 (Plan of Subdivision) and the houses at 86, 88 and 92 Stanhope Street on allotments in the Stanhope Park subdivision of 1888 (Auction notice). The original Winter's Estate subdivision included seven large allotments on the south side of Stanhope Street, between Glenferrie Road and Irving Street, and subsequent re-subdivision created smaller allotments between large end allotments.

44 Stanhope Street was a large allotment near the Glenferrie Road corner and by 1886 a house had been built on the site (Figure 3). Builder John Wright owned this allotment at this time and presumably designed and built the house which he then occupied for three years (*Age*, 10 April 1888:8). In 1889 the house was purchased by Alfred Mellor who remained the owner and occupier until it was purchased by John de Groot in 1891 (Malvern Rate Books). At this date it was described as an 8-roomed brick house. In 1901 the house was named 'Roma' (S&M). There have been various owners and occupants of 44 Stanhope Street since this time.

The western portion of the allotment was subdivided and sold in the early twentieth century (between 1902 and 1945, see Figures 3-4). Current aerial photographs indicate that a later addition has been constructed off the rear of the house (date not known).

Description Summary

Roma at 44 Stanhope Street, Malvern is situated on the south side of Stanhope Street, near the corner of Glenferrie Road. The house has a modest setback from the street frontage and is clearly visible behind a modern timber picket fence.

This single-storey polychromatic brick house has Victorian Italianate detailing consisting of a rendered balustraded parapet with prominent semicircular pediment containing shell and mask motifs and acroteria, and cornice with dentilled frieze with vermiculated panels and patera. Chimney cornices are typical of the era, while behind the parapet are slate-clad hipped roof forms. The two projecting bays, either side of a central wall with niche, have three double-hung segment-arch windows.

Key Features:

- Victorian Italianate style house
- Polychromatic brick walls
- Concealed slate-clad double hipped roof
- Symmetrical front elevation with projecting polygonal bays either side of a central wall with niche with decorative corbelled base
- Highly decorative cement rendered balustraded parapet with name plate, prominent semicircular pediment containing shell and mask motifs and acroteria, and cornice with dentilled frieze with vermiculated panels and patera (the latter detailing replicated at 46 and 50 Stanhope Street, the first three of this group of ten houses built by Wright)
- Verandah and entry to east side
- Simple unframed segmental arch-headed window openings to projecting bays
- Cement rendered chimneys with corniced capping.

Intactness/Integrity

The house at 44 Stanhope Street remains highly intact to its period of construction. The place retains a high degree of integrity and legibility as a Victorian Italianate house.

References

Auction Notice for Stanhope Park Malvern, 1888.

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.

Landata Victoria, historical aerial photograph, 1945.

Malvern Rate Books.

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Plan No 1743, 1902.

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

Plan of Subdivision Winter's Estate, 1881.

Sands and McDougall Melbourne Directories (S&M).

The Age.

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

Historic Images and Plans



Figure 2. Winter's Estate subdivision, showing the original subdivision of the south side of Stanhope Street, 1881. (Source: SLV)

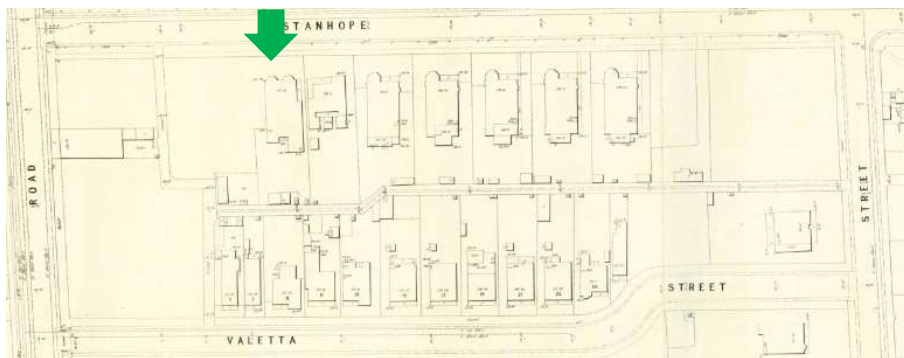


Figure 3. Detail of MMBW Plan No 1743, dated 1902, showing seven houses at 44-54 Stanhope Street. Green arrow indicates no. 44 (Source: SLV)



Figure 4. Aerial photograph showing houses at 44-54 Stanhope Street, Malvern, 1945. Green arrow indicates no. 44 (Source: Landata)