

HERITAGE CITATION

Former Motor Garage, 1140 Malvern Road, Malvern



Figure 1. 1140 Malvern Road, Malvern (GJM Heritage, November 2020).

DATE: June 2021

FORMER MOTOR GARAGE, 1140 MALVERN ROAD, MALVERN

Place type: Motor Garage (Former)	Architect: Not known
Construction Date: 1927	Builder: Not known
Recommendation: Include in the Heritage Overlay	Extent of Overlay: To the extent of the property boundary

Locality History

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

The brick garage at 1140 Malvern Road, Malvern (originally addressed as 58 or 60 Malvern Road) was built in 1927 for owner Arnold W Searle, to serve as Stonnington Motors (Malvern Rate Books; SHC MB5178). Searle may have owned the property from the early 1920s – in 1921 Searle and his family resided at the neighbouring property ‘Croft’, at 56 Malvern Road (current 1138; since demolished) (*Argus*, 27 Aug 1921:13). Searle was previously employed in Motor Transport for the Imperial Army (*Table Talk*, 5 Nov 1914:9).

Architectural drawings submitted to Council in 1926 show the proposed design for the garage at the subject site (Figures 3 & 4). This design was similar to the executed design, with annotations indicating that some redesign was required to extend the building from 47ft wide to 50ft. The design included steel framed windows and a central folding door to the primary elevation that provided vehicular access off Malvern Road. The floor area (5,525ft²) was spanned by steel trusses. Annotations noted that the owner lived adjacent, to the west (SHC MB5178).

In December 1926, the subject site (Lot 12, 60 Malvern Road) comprised vacant land that was owned by Stonnington Motors Pty Ltd. By November 1927, the site comprised a brick garage (Malvern Rate Books). In March 1927 ‘Stonnington Motors Pty Ltd’ was registered as a company under directors James Stapleton,

Arnold Watson Searle and Bernard Smith (*Herald*, 18 Mar 1927:18). The earliest advertisement found for Stonnington Motors operating at the location is dated April 1927 (*Age*, 2 April 1927:29; *Argus* 9 April 1927:4). In 1930 Stonnington Motors Pty Ltd, motor engineers and garage, was listed in the Sands & McDougall Directory at 58 Malvern Road, Malvern.

An aerial photograph dated c1925-c1935 (Figure 5) shows the brick garage from the south, while an aerial dated 1945 shows the footprint of the building, set back from the front boundary, and the central entrance (Figure 6). Stonnington Motors operated from 1140 Malvern Road until 1935, after which the building was occupied by H G Liddell, who continued to use it as a garage.

Subsequent occupants of the building included Malvern Buick Taxi Service Pty Ltd in 1940 (motor hire) and Armstrong & Whittle from the mid-1940s to mid-1950s (served as a garage for the undertakers who were located at 215 Glenferrie Road) (S&M). From the late 1950s (possibly to 1992) Pinnacle Agencies, wholesale hardware merchants occupied the property and it ceased to operate as a motor garage (S&M; Malvern Valuation Field Card). In 1992, the property was sold to Deutscher Fine Art P/L (Valuation Card). In 2021, the building serves as 'Eleven40 Studio', a photography and film studio.

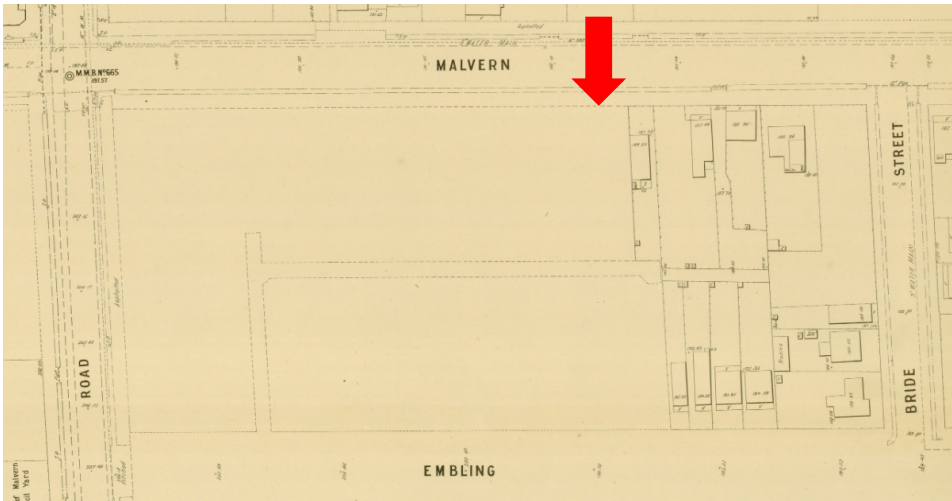


Figure 2. MMBW Detail Plan No 1759 showing the vacant land on the subject site, 1902 (SLV)

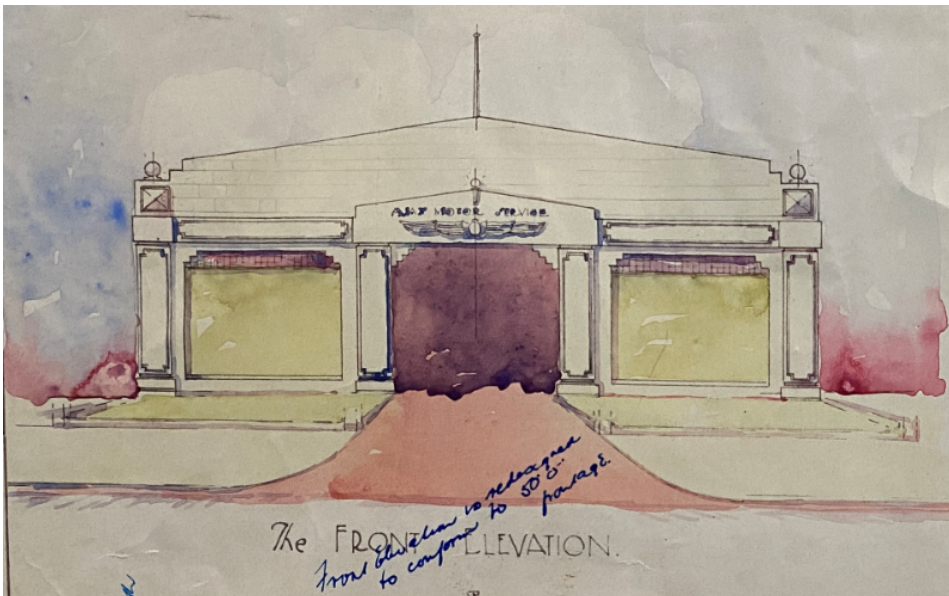


Figure 3. The proposed design for the brick garage, for owner A W Searle. The annotation in pen notes that the front elevation was to be redesigned to conform to a 50' frontage (SHC MB5178).

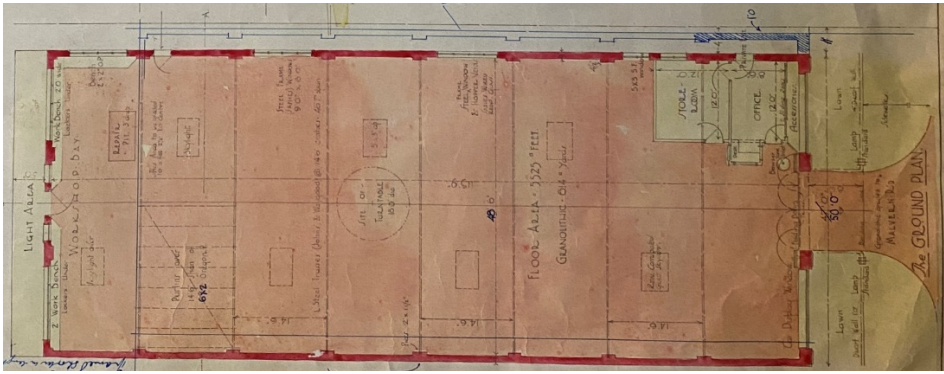


Figure 4. The ground plan of the earlier proposed design for the brick garage. North is right (SHC MB5178).



Figure 5. Looking north at the rear of the garage building (indicated by the red arrow), c1925-c1935 (SLV).



Figure 6. Detail of a 1945 aerial photograph showing the brick garage at the subject site (Landata Victoria)

Historical Themes

The place illustrates the following themes as outlined in *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*:

- 3 Connecting Victorians by transport and communications
 - 3.4 Linking Victorians by road in the 20th century
- 6 Building towns, cities and the garden state
 - 6.3 Shaping the suburbs

Description

The former motor garage at 1140 Malvern Road is located on the south side of Malvern Road. While the property has a long-term commercial function, neighbouring properties at 1138 and 1142 Malvern Road are residential, and the areas to the north, east and south have a predominantly residential character.

A large single-storey gable-roofed building occupies the majority of the site. It is built to the eastern and western boundaries, with a shallow (approximately 2.7m) setback from the front (north) boundary. A small yard and flat-roofed outbuilding are positioned at the rear of the main building. The roof is clad in (later) corrugated metal sheeting, with a single rectangular skylight positioned at the west eave at the approximate centreline of the building.

Structurally, the garage comprises steel trusses supported on masonry walls. The walls are rendered and overpainted, with additional detailing to the principal (north) elevation in a restrained Egyptian Revival style including a raked parapet concealing the roof form, random squared imitation ashlar brought to course, and various string mouldings, pyramidal motifs and cornices. The parapet steps down every four brick courses to the eaves line. A 'winged sun' heraldic device is prominently mounted over the central entry doors on a shallow triangular pediment. The arrangement of a large shop window (with later window sets) either side of the central entry sets up a symmetrical tripartite arrangement across this elevation.

A red-tinted concrete driveway spans between the crossover to Malvern Road and the (later) front entry doors which formerly provided vehicular access to the garage. The remainder of the forecourt between the principal (north) elevation of the building and the front boundary comprises at-grade carpark.

Key Features:

- Imposing horizontal form
- Rigid symmetry across the principal (north) elevation
- Restrained ornamentation to principal elevation, including parapet, mouldings, pilasters with recessed panels and central pediment with winged heraldic device
- Broad reference to the Egyptian Revival style in the composition and detailing of the principal elevation
- Masonry form with large display windows and flanking a large central doorway
- Gable roof form.

Intactness/Integrity

The former motor garage at 1140 Malvern Road retains a high degree of integrity to its period of construction in fabric, form and detail. While the building has undergone some minor alterations, including replacement of the original garage entry with double doors and the removal of incised lettering above the entry pediment,

these do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as an example of a motor garage built in the late-1920s.

Comparative Analysis

The former motor garage at 1140 Malvern Road is of note as a fine and representative example of a motor garage in the City of Stonnington.

There are no direct comparisons currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme. Only one motor garage is currently included in the Heritage Overlay as an individual heritage place – the Former Homedon Garage, 4 Lawrenny Court, Toorak (HO476). However, this is not a relevant comparison as it was constructed as a six-car garage and chauffeur’s quarters to service a private residence, rather than being a commercial garage.

The former motor garage at 1140 Malvern Road is important as a highly intact example of a 1920s motor garage, built at a time when private car ownership was increasing in popularity. It retains a high degree of integrity to clearly demonstrate the characteristics of a suburban motor garage.

Assessment against Criteria

Following is an assessment of the place against the recognised heritage criteria set out in *Planning Practice Note 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay* (August 2018).

Criterion A: Importance to the course or pattern of our cultural or natural history

The former motor garage at 1140 Malvern Road is illustrative of the growth of private transport in the City of Stonnington in the interwar period when private car ownership was increasing rapidly in popularity. Built in 1927 as a commercial motor garage to serve the local community, it coincides with the emergence of the car as a preferred means of private transport and clearly illustrates this important phase of development in Malvern, and across Victoria more broadly.

Criterion E: Importance in displaying particular aesthetic characteristics

The former motor garage at 1140 Malvern Road is a distinctive and carefully detailed example of a motor garage which incorporates references to the Egyptian Revival style. The design, with its strong symmetrical composition, triangular parapet concealing the roof form behind and large display windows flanking the central entry, together with the use of distinctive architectural elements, including central entry pediment with winged sun herald and flanking pilasters with recessed panels, presents a picturesque composition of this architectural style.

Grading and Recommendations

It is recommended that the place be included in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme as a locally significant heritage place.



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

External Paint Controls?	No
Internal Alteration Controls?	No
Tree Controls?	No
Outbuildings or Fences not exempt under Clause 43.01-3?	No
Prohibited Uses Permitted?	No
Aboriginal Heritage Place?	No

Extent of the Recommended Heritage Overlay

To the extent of the property boundary, as shown in Figure 7 below.



Figure 7. Recommended Extent of Heritage Overlay

References

Commonwealth of Australia Gazette (CAG), Issue No. G27, Tuesday 17 July 1984, page 2773.

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.

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Malvern Rate Books.

Malvern Valuation Field Cards.

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Base Plan No. 61, 1902.

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Detail Plan No. 1713, 1908.

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

Sands & McDougall Directory.

State Library of Victoria (SLV).

Stonnington History Centre (SHC), reference numbers as cited.

Table Talk.



The Age.

The Argus.

The Herald.

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