

HERITAGE CITATION

Malvern Bowling Club, 14 Coonil Crescent, Malvern



Figure 1. Malvern Bowling Club, Malvern (GJM Heritage, November 2020).

DATE: June 2021

MALVERN BOWLING CLUB, 14 COONIL CRESCENT, MALVERN

Place type: Bowling Club	Architect: Leonard J Flannagan (1911 Pavilion)
Construction Date: 1911 (Bowling green) 1911 (Pavilion – demolished) 1961 (Clubhouse)	Builder: Not known
Recommendation: Remove from HO375 and include in site-specific 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.

History of Lawn Bowls in Victoria

In eighteenth and nineteenth century England, lawn bowls was commonly played on greens attached to taverns, inns and hotels. The sport began in colonial Australia in much the same way (Context 2009:200). Hotels in Prahran, Richmond and St Kilda boasted greens by the 1860s (*Argus*, 8 September 1860:4) with the first club formalised on 11 April 1864 when the Melbourne Bowling Club established a rink at Chapel Street, Windsor (eMelbourne). Club members were a cross-section of the city's colonial elite - politicians, government officials, and businessmen. They played on weekdays and paid a substantial fee for the privilege (*Argus*, 30 September 1865:5). As early as July 1867, the six clubs in existence at the time (Melbourne, Fitzroy, West Melbourne, St Kilda, Prahran and Ballarat) met and agreed to a set of rules for the game to be used in inter club matches (Monro 1958).

The first intercolonial bowls contest was held between Victoria and New South Wales in April 1880. Victoria claimed the contest and the Victorian Bowls Association was formed three months later (eMelbourne). Although originally dominated by men, the sport became popular among women in the first half of the twentieth century. The first women's intercolonial match between Victoria and New South Wales was held in 1900, and the Australian Women's Bowling Council was formed in 1947 (eMelbourne). The sport witnessed

dramatic expansion in the 1950s and 1960s, making lawn bowls one of the largest participant sports in Australia at the time (eMelbourne).

Some of the oldest bowls clubs in Victoria are located in the City of Stonnington with the Prahran Bowling Club formed one year after the Melbourne Bowling Club in 1865. It was disbanded for a few years, and re-formed in 1888. It played on greens in Grattan Gardens until 1999. Meanwhile the Malvern Heights Bowling Club operated at the private residence Kia Ora in Malvern from 1911-18 (Context 2009:200).

Place History

In 1885, a two-storey Italianate style mansion, designed by architects Reed, Henderson & Smart for Arthur & Jane Langmore and named Coonil, was built on 20 acres of land on Wattletree Road in Malvern. The vast estate included extensive gardens, stables, orchard and a tennis court (Figure 2). In 1910, Coonil was purchased by banker and finance agent, Frederick Hagelthorn MLC who subdivided the mansion's grounds, creating Coonil Crescent, Canberra Grove, Derril Avenue and the south end of Grace Street (Figure 3). The Coonil Estate included building restrictions that prohibited the construction of timber houses. The terms of sale stipulated that no buildings could be erected for less than £600 in value and only single dwellings could be erected on each allotment (Malvern Historical Society 2007:22).

In February 1908, Malvern residents had begun meeting to discuss the option of establishing a lawn bowls club, to be known as Malvern Bowling Club, in the locality and it was reported that up to 50 people had 'signified their willingness to join the new club' (*Prahran Telegraph*, 1 February 1908:5). In early 1911, Hon. F Hagelthorn MLC presented the Malvern Bowling Club with a large portion of his land within the Coonil Estate for the establishment of a bowling green. By June 1911, the Malvern Bowling Club was officially registered, with Hagelthorn as the first president and 81 paying members. The laying of the green, undertaken by Mr Horsfall, was completed by this time (*Malvern Standard*, 11 February 1911:3; *Malvern Standard*, 24 June 1911:3).

A clubhouse was deemed a necessity from inception (*Prahran Telegraph*, 25 February 1911:2) and in August 1911, local architect and club Vice President Leonard J Flannagan invited tenders for the erection of a 'timber and rough cast club pavilion' (*Age*, 26 August 1911:4) (Figures 4 and 5). The 'handsome pavilion' was erected in time for the opening ceremony on 25 November 1911 and the new green was officially opened by the Premier of Victoria, John Murray, in the presence of about 300 guests (*Geelong Advertiser*, 27 November 1911:5; *Age* 27 November 1911:15). At the time of the opening of the Malvern Bowling Club, there were over 100 clubs in Victoria and between 6000 and 7000 players (*Age* 27 November 1911:15). A photograph of the opening shows the new pavilion to be a Federation bungalow-style building comprising a complex series of terracotta tile-clad gabled roof forms with decorative finials, timber battening to gable ends, rough cast render walls and timber-framed windows (Figure 4).

In the ensuing years, the Malvern Bowling Club was regularly regarded as 'the beautiful green and charming surroundings' (*Malvern Standard*, 25 September 1930:2) situated in a 'charming and exclusive locality' (*Malvern Standard*, 9 October 1930:4). The bowling green was officially opened at the beginning of each season by various local and state officials. Often this was undertaken by the Club President or Mayor; in 1950 however, Sir Dallas Brooks, Governor of Victoria, officiated the opening. Brooks was reported to be a life member of the Malvern Bowling Club (*Herald* 17 November 1949:25).

Improvements were proposed for the club at the beginning of the 1960s and in March 1961, tenders for the demolition of the Malvern Bowling Club pavilion were invited (*Age* 22 March 1961:43; Malvern Valuation Field Card). In the same year, a new brick clubhouse, designed in a Moderne style, was constructed on the site of the earlier pavilion. From the 1960s to the 1980s, further additions and alterations, including the erection of

fences, a carport and various shelter sheds, were undertaken (Malvern Valuation Field Card) (Figure 7). The place continues to operate as the Malvern Bowling Club.

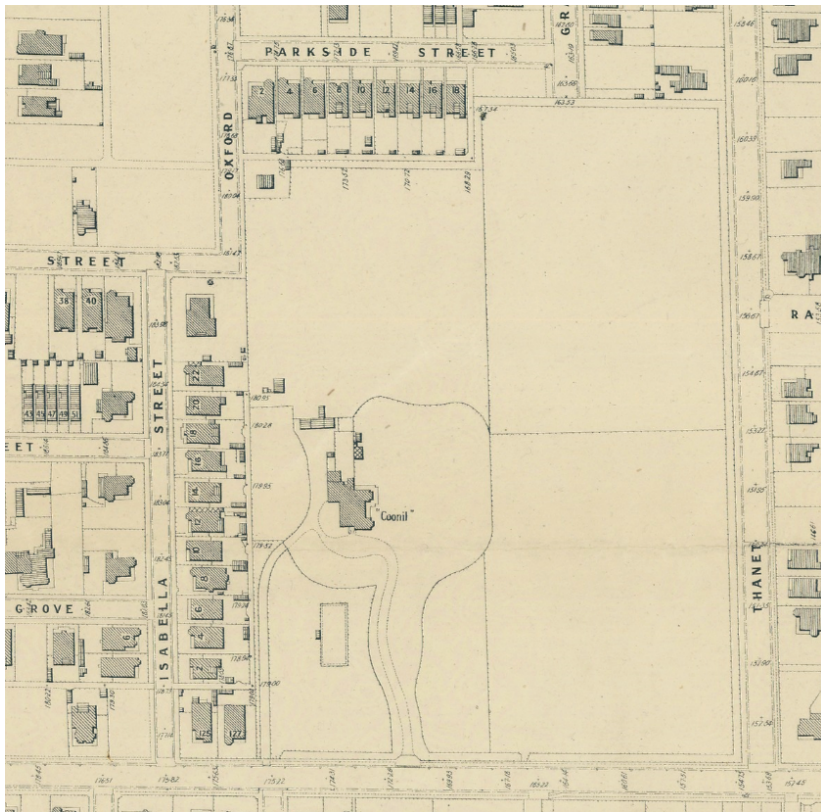


Figure 2. MMBW Base Plan No 61 showing the mansion 'Coonil' and its extensive grounds, 1901 (SLV)

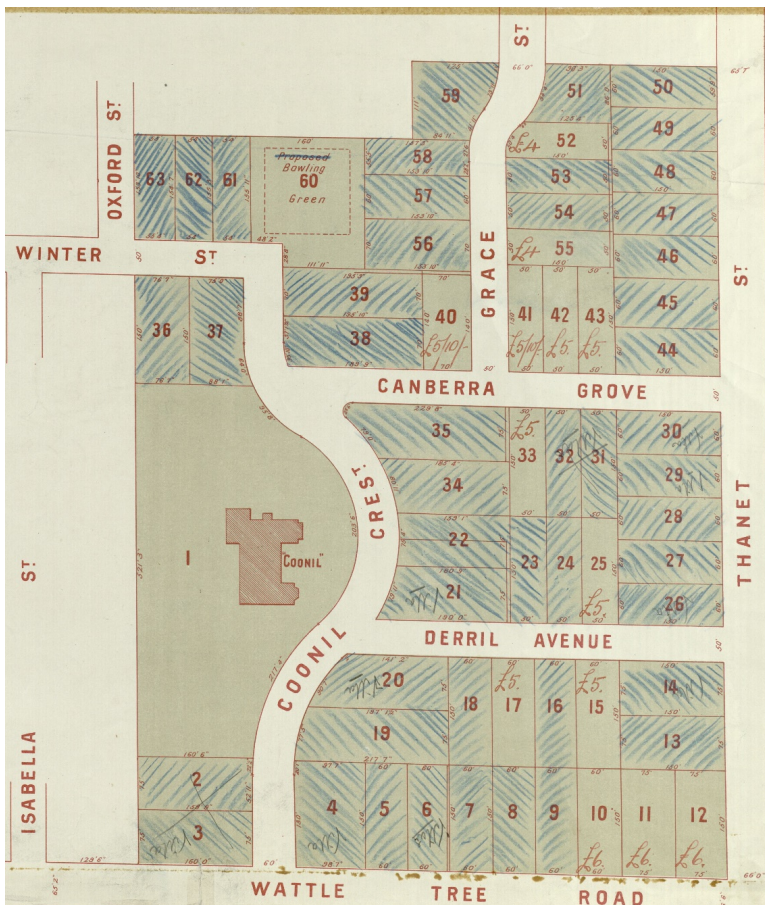


Figure 3. Detail of a 1910 Coonil Estate advertisement. Subject site is annotated 'Proposed [crossed out] Bowling Green at Lot 60' (SLV, Filename va002370).





Figure 4. Opening of the Malvern Bowling Club, showing the original timber and rendered pavilion (Punch, 30 November 1911:28)



Figure 5. Playing bowls at Malvern Bowling Club with the original pavilion in the background, c1916 (SHC MP2684)



Figure 6. Oblique aerial photograph showing the Malvern Bowling Club, c1940 (SHC)



Figure 7. The current brick pavilion at the Malvern Bowling Club (Malvern Bowling Club Facebook page, accessed April 2021)

Historical Themes

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

- 9 Shaping cultural and creative life
 - 9.1 Participating in sport and recreation

Description

Malvern Bowling Club is located at the corner of Coonil Crescent and Winter Street in Malvern, north of Wattletree Road. The bowling green forms the centre of a block of highly intact nineteenth and early-twentieth century dwellings, bounded by Parkside Street to the north, Grace Street to the east, Oxford Street to the west and Winter Street and Canberra Grove to the south. A narrow bluestone laneway bisects this block east-to-west, and forms the northern boundary of the bowling green. The east, south and west boundaries of the Malvern Bowling Club are shared with the side or rear boundaries of the surrounding residential properties.

The Malvern Bowling Club comprises a club building at the south end of the site, addressing the entry from Coonil Crescent, a bowling green to the north of the club building that measures approximately 50m wide and 37m in length, and a number of player shelters.

The club building is a single-storey masonry structure constructed in a style reminiscent of the Interwar Moderne. The roof, behind a shallow parapet, is clad in metal sheeting. The walls at the two most visible elevations – west and north – are of cream brick, with brown brick highlights at the parapet and windowsills (the rear [south] elevation is of a plainer orange brick). A horizontal emphasis is created by a broad central band of render that corresponds to the height of the highlight windows and wraps around the corner across the west and north façades. The west elevation presents to Coonil Crescent and advertises the Club with cast-iron lettering – ‘Malvern Bowling Club Inc 1911’ – mounted above a large window opening. An ancillary entry is located at the south end of the west elevation; the main entry to the club building is via the centrally-positioned and elevated entry portico at the north elevation. Players access the entry portico by rounding the building’s north-western extremity, which features two filleted corners typical of the Moderne style. Additional lettering over the portico features the initials of the Club – ‘MBC.’ A later skillion-roofed verandah, supported on square posts, has been added to the north elevation of the club building. Various timber honour boards with gold lettering are displayed within the club building and date to as early as 1911.

Player sheds/shelters are arranged to the north and south of the green and are rectangular utilitarian structures with skillion, metal-clad roofs on cream brick walls, open on the side that faces the green. Timber bench seating is mounted on brackets off the internal walls and the upper three-four courses of the rear walls

are laid in a hit-and-miss bond to provide ventilation. An additional gable-roofed shed structure is located at the far northwest corner of the site and features a terracotta-tiled roof and painted lettering reading 'The Keith Leonard Fleetwood Shed'; this shed likely pre-dates the current (1961) club building.

The Club is accessed from Coonil Crescent via a small at-grade carpark. This entry is fenced with a medium-height (approximately 1.5m) cream brick wall, with decorative wrought iron gates and infill panels.

Key Features:

- The continuous use of the site as a lawn bowls club since its establishment
- The location, form and extent of the bowling green, edged with player shelters
- The siting of the clubhouse with honour boards
- The setting within the nineteenth and early-twentieth century residences of the Coonil Estate Precinct.



Figure 8. The Malvern Bowling Club (nearmap, April 2021)

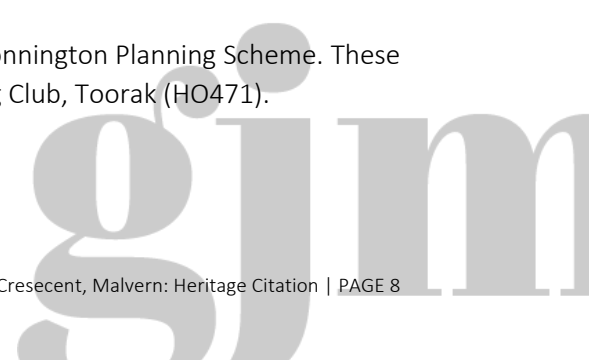
Intactness/Integrity

Malvern Bowling Club remains in use as a lawn bowling green, and has a high degree of integrity as a lawn bowling club. The location, form and extent of the green remains intact and a clubhouse remains in its original location (although the original clubhouse has been replaced).

Comparative Analysis

The Malvern Bowling Club is of note for its long and enduring association with local community sporting and recreational activities in the City of Stonnington.

Two bowling clubs are currently included in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme. These are the Melbourne Bowling Club, Windsor (HO472) and the Toorak Bowling Club, Toorak (HO471).



The Melbourne Bowling Club, founded in 1864, is believed to be the oldest continually operating bowls club in Australia. It retains an 1887 clubhouse in an altered state with later additions. Toorak Bowling Club was established in 1913 and opened on its present site in Toorak in 1914. It retains its original timber pavilion (in an altered state), which was built in 1914 to designs by noted architect I G Beaver. Both places are of historical and social significance to the City of Stonnington for their ongoing use as venues for community sporting and recreational activities. Melbourne Bowling Club is of additional historical significance as the first lawn bowls club to be successfully formed in Victoria. They are also of architectural significance for their pavilions, which date to 1887 (Toorak) and 1914 (Toorak) and survive, albeit in altered states.

In comparison, Malvern Bowling Club was established two years prior to the Toorak Bowling Club, in 1911. The original clubhouse, constructed the same year, was demolished in the late 1950s. While the site retains little to no early built fabric, its original form (including the location, form and extent of the greens and the location of the clubhouse) remains broadly intact. It remains important for its long and enduring association with local community sporting and recreational activities in the City of Stonnington, having continuously operated at the site since its establishment in 1911. Malvern Bowling Club demonstrates the typical characteristics of a lawn bowls club, including a large rectangular bowling green, players shelters and a clubhouse.

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

Established in 1911 and operating continuously since its establishment, the Malvern Bowling Club has a clear association with the development of community recreational facilities in the City of Stonnington. It is important for its long and enduring association with local community sporting and recreational activities in the municipality from the early twentieth century.

Criterion G: Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons

The Malvern Bowling Club is of social significance for its long and continuing use as a venue for community sporting and recreational activities in the City of Stonnington. Established in 1911, it continues to serve the local Malvern community as a community recreational facility.

Grading and Recommendations

It is recommended that the place be removed from HO375 (Coonil Estate Precinct) and included in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme on a site-specific basis.

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 9 below.



Figure 9. Recommended Extent of Heritage Overlay

References

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

Coonil Estate advertisement, 1910.

Geelong Advertiser.

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

J P Monro, *Bowls encyclopedia*, Melbourne 1958.

Malvern Historical Society, *Walk into History 4*, 2007.

Malvern Standard.

Malvern Valuation Field Cards.

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Base Plan No. 61, 1901.

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

Prahran Telegraph.

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