

1 Linlithgow Road, Toorak Heritage Citation Report



Figure 1 1 Linlithgow Road, Toorak.

History and Historical Context

Thematic Context

The following is drawn from the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006).

The End of an Era – Mansion Estates Subdivision in the Early Twentieth Century

Toorak has been described as ‘*the only suburb to acquire and keep a name which was synonymous in the public mind with wealth, extravagance and display*’.¹ The suburb’s climb to fashionable pre-eminence was due to its pleasing topographic features and the presence of the Governor’s residence from 1854 (Toorak House, after which the suburb is named). Toorak and the higher parts of South Yarra were settled by pastoralists, army officers, high-ranking professionals, and ‘self made’ merchants and traders. Their wealth was manifested in the construction of a suitably impressive mansion, usually set within expansive grounds. As Victoria’s land boom progressed into the late 1880s, the mansions became more elaborate, one of the best surviving examples being *Illawarra* (1 Illawarra Crescent), built by land-boomer Charles Henry James in 1891.

After the collapse of the land boom, many mansions were put to other uses, subdivided or demolished. The subdivision of the old estates of Toorak began to increase after World War I when the cost of maintaining these large properties became prohibitive. This process of

¹ Paul de Serville, *Pounds and Pedigrees: The Upper Class in Victoria 1850-1880*, p.147.

subdivision created a unique pattern of development which can still be understood and interpreted today. Although new subdivisions imposed new road patterns within the original grids, in many cases new estates and streets bore the name of the old properties, while the original houses were sometimes retained within a reduced garden. Toorak nonetheless retained its appeal as a wealthy enclave.

Creating Australia's most designed suburb

Toorak is notable for the strong culture of patronage between architects and their wealthy clients, which existed from the earliest times of settlement. This has resulted in a much higher than average ratio of architect designed houses. In Albany Road alone, 47 of the 61 houses built since 1872 have been attributed to architects. The consequence of this is one of the strongest concentrations of high quality residential architecture in Australia, which provides an important record of all major architectural styles and movements since the earliest days of settlement.

Architects were particularly busy in Toorak in the boom years of the 1880s when ever more prosperous merchants, businessmen and land speculators sought to create houses that would stand as testament to their wealth, status and fashionable taste. A great many examples of nineteenth century domestic architecture in the Municipality were lost through demolition, however many of these demolitions created opportunities for twentieth century architects.

After the turn of the century, architects continued to have a major influence on the wealthy suburbs that make up present day Stonnington. Walter Butler, Robert Hamilton, Marcus Martin and Rodney Alsop were among the notable architects whose work is well represented in Toorak.

Place History

The property at 1 Linlithgow Road originally formed part of Crown Allotment 26. First purchased in 1849 by merchant James Jackson, Lot 26 comprised 76 acres of land bordered by present day Kooyong, Malvern and Toorak Roads and the line of Denham Place. Jackson also purchased 108 acres of land west of Kooyong Road, where he built his mansion 'Toorak House'. East of Kooyong Road, most of 'Jackson's Paddock' remained undivided for more than twenty years. The land was fenced and leased to a succession of dairymen.

With the subdivision of Jackson's Paddock in 1872, Albany Road was created. Western District pastoralist Albert Austin acquired six acres of land in Albany Road and in 1886 built a mansion, named 'Eilyer' after his country property. By 1894, Austin owned a total of twenty-nine acres of elevated land fronting Albany Road.² Austin died at Eilyer in 1916.

In 1919, Edward Herbert Shackell purchased 'Eilyer' from the estate of Austin's wife Catherine. The mansion was demolished, the surrounding grounds were sub-divided and, in 1919, a building plan was submitted to Malvern Council by architects Walter and Richard Butler for a two-storey residence for Shackell in Albany Road.³ 'Eilyer's' stables were retained as Shackell's laundry and later converted into a residence (now known as 1A Linlithgow Road).⁴

In 1922 Linlithgow Road was extended to meet Albany Road, and Shackell's house was numbered 1 Linlithgow Road.⁵

² Stonnington Local History Catalogue, Reg. No. MP 13568.

³ Stonnington Local History Catalogue, Reg. No. MB 5223.

⁴ Stonnington Local History Catalogue, Reg. No. MP 14960.

⁵ Stonnington Local History Catalogue, Reg. No. MP 10559.

Walter & Richard Butler

Architect Walter Richmond Butler (1864-1949) was born in England and while working in London developed associations with important figures in the Arts and Crafts Movement. Butler migrated to Australia in 1888, and from 1889 to 1893 was in partnership with Beverley Ussher. From 1907 to 1916 he partnered Ernest R Bradshaw, and after 1919 he was in practice with his nephew Austin Richard Butler (1892-1961) as W & R Butler, and from 1926 to 1931 with Marcus Martin as W & R Butler and Martin. Butler gradually withdrew from practice after his only son was killed in the First World War, leaving much of the design work to younger partners. He died at his Toorak home in 1949.

Walter Butler is remembered as an architect of great sophistication with a talent for Arts and Crafts design. His diverse oeuvre includes shops, warehouses, hospitals, ecclesiastical buildings, office buildings and urban planning. However, his grand houses, many of which survive in the City of Stonnington, are generally considered his greatest achievement. Locally, his designs for Warrawee, Orrong Road [now demolished] and Thanet (subsequently Wyalla) 13A Monaro Road, Kooyong are among his most successful works.

Description

The building at 1 Linlithgow Road is a substantial double-storey house with an asymmetrical façade exhibiting a restrained Georgian revival character. The principal wing containing an entry porch has a low pitched slate roof and wide eaves giving a horizontal emphasis. The roof is dominated by a massive chimney. A secondary service wing projects towards the street and is of slightly lower scale. Walls have a render finish principally of a rough cast texture, with a smooth render for a string course separating the floors, providing mouldings to the chimneys and defining the entry portico. The windows have glazing bars of a Georgian-influenced form. The entry porch comprises a classically-derived pediment set on Ionic columns. The principal rooms are orientated towards the rear garden, well concealed from the street. The front forecourt has a simple double entry drive with rough cast rendered piers and a low fence in between.

The house is substantially intact in terms of its streetscape presentation apart from a low set garage addition. The original architectural drawings show a different vaulted entry porch and chimney design that were not built. The current portico design can be seen in a 1932 photograph.⁶ It is understood that extensive alterations have occurred internally and to the rear and west side elevations.⁷

Comparative Analysis

The restrained Georgian revival house at 1 Linlithgow Road is of a relatively advanced design for its period of construction. It was built c1919, not long after Georgian influenced design had first began to appear in Melbourne. While architect Walter Butler is most closely associated with the Arts and Crafts aesthetic, it is apparent that he was experimenting with a more formal, stylised Classical idiom in pre-war houses such as Grong Grong on Toorak Road (1906, demolished in the 1960s). The house at 1 Linlithgow Road is also of interest for appearing to have been influenced by the Prairie School in its low-slung horizontality.⁸ Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin are credited with having introduced the Prairie School style when they began to practice in Melbourne and Sydney in 1914 although the influence of the style is evident in a small number of Melbourne houses from around 1912.

⁶ Stonnington Amendment L47(d) Citation 1 *Linlithgow Road, Valima, Toorak*. p.159.

⁷ *Stonnington Planning Scheme Amendment L47(D) Panel Report Part 2*, p.145.

⁸ Nigel Lewis, *City of Malvern Heritage Study*, p. 229.

Prairie School and Georgian revival influences are also apparent in the residence at 3 Yar Orrong Road, built around the same time as 1 Linlithgow Road, possibly to designs by J F W Ballantyne, a young architect who worked in the Griffin office. 3 Yar Orrong Road has an individual heritage overlay control (HO346). By comparison, 1 Linlithgow Road is a more refined and elegant design.

Thematic Context

The house at 1 Linlithgow Road, Toorak illustrates the following themes, as identified in the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (Context Pty Ltd, 2006):

- 8.1.3 - The end of an era – mansion estate subdivisions in the twentieth century
- 8.4.1 - Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion

Assessment Against Criteria

Assessment of the place was undertaken in accordance with the HERCON criteria and the processes outlined in the Australian ICOMOS (Burra) Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Heritage Significance.

Statement of Significance

Note that the relevant HERCON criteria and themes from the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (TEH) are shown in brackets.

What is Significant?

The house at 1 Linlithgow Road, Toorak is a substantial double-storey Georgian revival style residence designed by the noted architectural practice of W & R Butler. It was built c1919 on land subdivided from the nineteenth century Eilyer mansion estate.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include (but are not limited to):

- The original external form, materials and detailing of the building.
- The relatively high integrity of the character and appearance of the place.
- The domestic garden setting (but not the fabric of the garden itself)
- The low front fence and the piers at the driveway entrances.
- The absence of modern vehicle accommodation in the front setback other than the existing low-key garage addition.

Non-original fabric, including the garage, is not significant.

How is it significant?

The house at 1 Linlithgow Road is of local architectural significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The house is architecturally significant as a good interpretation of the interwar Georgian revival idiom with overtones of the Prairie School style. The simple architectural lines and strong horizontal emphasis found on the south and east facades, and the formal asymmetrical composition provide an elegant design that is a fine representation of the characteristics of interwar Toorak mansions (Criterion D). It is an important building from the renowned practice of Walter and Richard Butler.

The house is of some historical interest as evidence of a major phase of development that took place after the First World War when many of Toorak's grand nineteenth century mansion estates were subdivided to create prestigious residential enclaves (TEH 8.1.3 The end of an era – mansion estate subdivisions in the twentieth century, Criterion A). It also illustrates the role of houses generally, and refined Georgian inspired houses in particular, as

symbols of wealth, status and taste for Melbourne's upper classes of the interwar period (TEH 8.4.1 - Houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion).

Recommendations

Recommended for inclusion in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme to the extent of the whole property as defined by the title boundaries as shown in figure 2. External paint controls, internal alteration controls and tree controls are not recommended. It is further recommended that an A2 grading be assigned to the house.

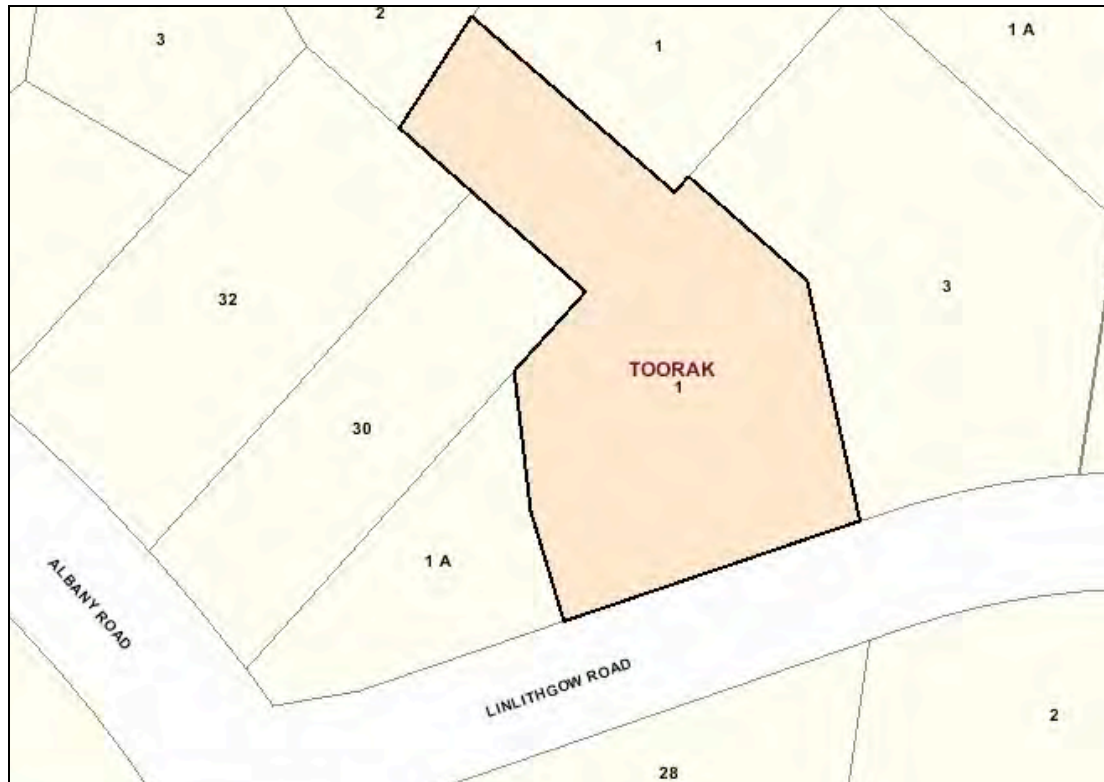


Figure 2 Recommended extent of heritage overlay for 1 Linlithgow Road, Toorak.