

## Statement of Significance: Miegunyah, 641 Orrong Road, Toorak, October 2023

<b>Heritage Place:</b> Miegunyah, Toorak	<b>PS ref no:</b> HO88
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(Source: University of Melbourne)

### What is significant?

The property at 641 Orrong Road, Toorak, (otherwise known as Miegunyah) is significant. Specifically, the form, scale and detailing of the substantial 1850s-1930s mansion as well as the English oak (*quercus robur*) trees and a Moreton Bay fig (*ficus macrophylla*) are of local heritage significance. The 1896 stables, if extant, would also be of local significance. The front boundary wall, pool, tennis court, broader garden setting and later alterations and additions to the property are not significant.

### How is it significant?

Miegunyah is of local historical, aesthetic, and associative significance to the City of Stonnington.

### Why is it significant?

Miegunyah is of historical significance in demonstrating the development of mid-19th century Victorian mansions by Melbourne's wealthiest citizens in Toorak, an area once characterised by Victorian era estates. The residence itself has been subject to design interventions by a number of prominent architects, including Harold Desbrowe-Anneer, who oversaw the 1920s alterations and additions to the residence, Stephenson and Meldrum, who oversaw the 1930s alterations and additions to the residence, and Philip B. Hudson and Wardrop, who oversaw the conversion of the stables in 1919-1920. In addition to the residence, the mature English oaks (*quercus robur*) and the Moreton Bay fig (*ficus macrophylla*) are also historically significant as remnant plantings from the Miegunyah Estate. (Criterion A)

Miegunyah has aesthetic significance as a high-quality but visually distinct example of a mid-Victorian era mansion that has been extensively altered with Arts and Crafts extensions and design detailing. The Victorian characteristics are not easily discernible anymore, other than the hipped slate roof. The notable Arts and Crafts characteristics include the use of render, recessed square form and single corbel chimneys, window shutters, and elliptical windows reflective of Harold Desbrowe-Anneer's design style. The site also has aesthetic value for its mature garden setting, including several tall mature English oaks (*quercus robur*) and a mature Moreton Bay fig (*ficus macrophylla*). (Criterion E)

Miegunyah has associative significance as the home of Sir Wilfrid Russell Grimwade and Lady Mabel Louise Grimwade for over six decades. The Grimwades were a prominent and influential industrialist

family who are noted for their enduring philanthropic contributions to various educational and cultural organisations. Miegunyah was of great importance to Grimwade family – it was the site of numerous social events hosted by Sir and Lady Grimwade, housed their impressive collection of artworks, furniture, objects and botanical specimens, and the heavily landscaped garden itself was an expression of the Grimwade's enduring horticultural interests. (Criterion H)

**Primary source**

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*Miegunyah, 641 Orrong Road Toorak, Citation Report, Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, October 2023.*