

Heritage Citation – Individual Place

Heritage Place: Carmyle

Address: 7-9 Carmyle Avenue, Toorak

HO Reference: HO9

Citation status: Final

Date Updated: 24 October 2023

Designer: F. M. White (potentially), and later alterations by Ballantyne and Hare

Year of Construction: 1879

Builder: Archibald Fiskien



Photograph of Carmyle (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Location map and extent of HO9.

Heritage Group: Residential buildings

Heritage Type: Mansion

Key Theme: Buildings suburbs

Key Sub-theme: Creating Australia's most 'prestigious' suburbs – seats of the mighty – mansion estates in the 19th century

Significance Level: Local

Recommendation: Retain as an individually significant place on the HO

Controls:	<input type="checkbox"/> External paint colours	<input type="checkbox"/> Internal alterations	<input type="checkbox"/> Tree controls
	<input type="checkbox"/> Victorian Heritage Register	<input type="checkbox"/> Incorporated Plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Outbuildings and fences exemptions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prohibited uses may be permitted	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Heritage Place	

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The property at 7-9 Carmyle Avenue, Toorak (otherwise known as Carmyle) is significant. Specifically, the form, scale and detailing of the late Victorian mansion and its early 20th century alterations are significant, as well as the wrought iron fencing. The pool and outbuildings are not significant.

How is it significant?

Carmyle is of local historical and historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonington.

Why is it significant?

Carmyle is of historical significance in demonstrating the development of late Victorian houses within Toorak during the late 19th century, prior to the wider subdivision of the late Victorian estates. The house is also of historical significance in demonstrating residential development in the south eastern suburbs by Melbourne's wealthiest citizens during the gold rush period. (Criterion A)

Carmyle is aesthetically significant as a distinct and visually prominent example of late Victorian house designed by Francis Maloney White, with early 20th century additions by the architectural firm Ballantyne and Hare. Key elements that contribute towards the aesthetic value of the place include the double-storey arcaded loggias, a polygonal projecting bay, the use of a parapet to conceal the hipped slate roof, projecting course hood mouldings over windows, recessed entrance treatment off Carmyle Avenue and the use of stucco render. (Criterion E)

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	<i>Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history</i>	Carmyle is of historical significance in demonstrating the development of late Victorian houses within Toorak during the late 19th century, prior to the wider subdivision of the late Victorian estates. The house is also of historical significance in demonstrating residential development in the south eastern suburbs by Melbourne's wealthiest citizens during the gold rush period.
B	<i>Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
C	<i>Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
D	<i>Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
E	<i>Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics</i>	Carmyle is aesthetically significant as a distinct and visually prominent example of

		late Victorian house designed by Francis Maloney White, with early 20 th century additions by the architectural firm Ballantyne and Hare. Elements that contribute towards the aesthetic value of the place include the double-storey arcaded loggias, a polygonal projecting bay, the use of a parapet to conceal the hipped slate roof, projecting course hood mouldings over windows, recessed entrance treatment off Carmyle Avenue and the use of stucco render. All of these features are reflective of the mansions late Victorian construction.
F	<i>Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
G	<i>Strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons. This includes the significance of a place to Indigenous peoples as part of the continuing and developing cultural traditions</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
H	<i>Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.

Description

• Physical Analysis

Carmyle is a large two-storey mansion built in a masonry structure with a white stucco render. The house features a hipped slate tile roof with metal ridge capping in an M shaped profile. The roof has three distinct sections; a south hipped roof and the centre and north pyramid hipped roof. The centre pyramid hipped roof is clad in a corrugated iron sheeting.

The Carmyle Street elevation has a minimal set back from the street and the front centre bay abuts the footpath. The two-storey eastern elevation presents asymmetrically. The left bay is set back from the centre bay and has two windows on each floor. The arched double hung sash windows have a timber frame and masonry sill. The upper windows have a projecting course hood mould with three brackets each. The floors on the front façade are demarcated by a string course. Above the second storey windows are the cornice and parapet. The eastern elevation is part of the early 20th century extension designed by significant architects Ballantyne and Hare.

A building entrance on the eastern elevation is located in the centre bay to the right of two closely spaced windows. The entrance is recessed in a deep set porte cochre. The porte cochre is flanked by two

Doric pilasters. The arched entrance is emphasised by an arched stucco moulding with leaf shaped end moulding. The second storey features a four-bay verandah. The verandah has five Doric columns supported on an expressed foundation with cement rendered balusters. The verandah has two white timber French doors and two centred arched double hung sash windows.

The right bay is slightly wider than the left bay, albeit with the same set back. It has one window on the ground floor and two wider set windows on the first floor. The windows have the same form and detailing as the left bay. The right bay parapet is interrupted by a central, simply detailed and rendered chimney extending from the roof.

The southern elevation features a central three bay arcaded loggia on the ground floor and a three-bay verandah. The Doric columns, verandah detailing and window detailing remain consistent with the street front east façade. To the left of the arcuated loggia and verandah is a projecting gable roof bay typical to the Italianate style and to the right is an expressed Jacobean or Dutch gable. The gable features a bull's eye opening and a cement cast ball finial. The north elevation features a similar gable and detailing. There are six rendered corbelled chimneys with brackets projecting from the roof of the main structure.

The western elevation features a four bay arcuated loggia and verandah overlooking a backyard. As of November 2020, the grounds of the property have been completely relandscaped. These alterations include the swimming pool, plantings and driveway. All the trees have been removed except for one tree in the backyard and one tree by the south of the arcuated loggia.

The main structure is currently undergoing extensive work. The façade render is in poor condition and several windows have been replaced. Several windows on the south façade have been infilled.

Carmyle is located on Carmyle Avenue, a no-through road that terminates in a cul-de-sac. Carmyle Avenue extends off the main road, Malvern Road and is close to Erskine Street. Carmyle remains in use as a residential property and is considered to be in poor condition. The grounds are currently undergoing major relandscaping, however the main structure appears largely intact and would be considered to have high integrity.

- **Alterations and Additions**

- Eastern elevation extended when converted into flats by Ballantyne and Hare (early 20th century).
- Large down pipe added to the southern elevation.
- Two vent pipes added to the southern elevation.
- One skylight added to the main roof.
- Corrugated iron roofing added to portions of the main roof.
- Extensive relandscaping undertaken (2020)
- Extensive work on the main structure undertaken, including re-rendering of walls and replacing several windows (2021).
- Several southern elevation windows infilled (2021).
- Former stables, tennis court and outbuildings removed.

History

• Historical Context

For thousands of years preceding European colonialism, the area now known as Stonnington was the traditional home of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung people of the Eastern Kulin Nation. This environment would have provided Traditional Owners with access to pre-contact plains, grassy woodland, and floodplains on the banks of the Yarra River (Birrarung), Gardiners Creek (Kooyong Koot), and Hawksburn Creek (now channelised), in a rolling landscape on the northern shore of Port Phillip Bay. It is important to note that the rich cultural heritage of Traditional Owners in Stonnington did not end with colonialism—it has a rich presence to this day.

Following the establishment of Melbourne in 1835, squatter John Gardiner and many others like him sought out land in what would become present day Toorak and surrounds on account of its densely timbered landscape, undulating terrain and proximity to water. By 1840, crown land sales marked the area's transition to pastoral settlement, and later in 1851, with the purchase of land in Hawthorn by Thomas Herbert Power, the surrounding environments gradually became a place where the early merchant and squatter elite of Melbourne built their homesteads. In Toorak, this is best represented by the purchase of lot 26 by James Jackson, associate in Jackson, Rae & Co. soap and candle merchants. Jackson was described by politician William Westgarth as 'Melbourne's greatest merchant of this early time' (Forster 1999, 10). It is only fitting that his house, called Toorak House, would be the namesake of what would become arguably the most affluent suburb in Melbourne. Following the discovery of gold in the 1850s and the wealth this produced for ancillary trades, the Toorak area drew in Melbourne's newly wealthy. Today, over a century later, Toorak still has connotations of wealth and prestige as best represented in its history and built environment (Forster 1999, 5–26).

• Place History

A detailed history of 7-9 Carmyle Avenue has previously been authored by C Kellaway for the National Trust (Victoria) in 1977. The following account is drawn from this existing study and is augmented with supplementary archival research and revisions by Extent Heritage.

Carmyle is believed to have been designed by architect Francis Maloney White in 1879 for prominent Scottish pastoralist, stock-agent and government land tax commissioner Archibald Fiskien. Best known for designing the quadrangle at the University of Melbourne (1854-1857), F.M. White was a prominent London trained architect in mid to late 19th century Melbourne (Goad & Willis 2012, 762). Built by Fiskien himself, the twenty room two-storey mansion was occupied by Fiskien, his wife Charlotte (née McNamara), and children until at least 1886. Born in Scotland, Fiskien arrived in Port Phillip as a child before becoming in charge of his uncle's cattle station at the age of seventeen (Ann Hone 1972). He rapidly established a career for himself as a stockman and wool trader, and would go on to become the director of the Australasian Mortgage and Agency Co. (Ann Hone 1972).

In 1886, squatter Colin Simson is listed as the official owner of the mansion. By this time, the property is given the address Kooyong Road, and is described as a brick house of twenty rooms on six and a half acres of land with a valuation of £600. Colin's wife made particular use of the vast residential space throughout their occupancy, as evidenced in the numerous accounts of large social dances reported in newspapers and gazettes throughout the late 1880s (Table Talk 1887, 9; The Australasian 1889, 47; Table Talk 1889, 14). As illustrated in a 1902 MMBW plan, the house during the Simson occupancy

consisted of gates at the corner of Malvern and Kooyong Road, a service drive from Malvern Road, stables, a tennis court, outbuildings, a service wing and main elevations to the west and south (MMBW 1902). The Simson family occupied the house for around two decades, before it was sold off to manufacturer Ernest Poolman and his wife Belinda by 1907. During the Poolman occupancy, the mansion was given the name Carmyle.

In 1918, Carmyle was subdivided and auctioned off. A newspaper article at the time of its auction described the residence as a ‘two-story mansion of 16 rooms with nearly seven acres of land, having extensive frontages to Malvern Road, Kooyong Road, and Albany Road...’ (The Herald 1918, 14). Following its auction, Mary Williams was listed as the official owner of the residence. Her occupancy was short lived however, and by 1921, Williams had sold Carmyle and taken up residency at a flat on Toorak Road (The Prahan Telegraph 1921, 6). The first floor of the mansion was modified into flats in the years following the 1921 auction. A 1925 building plan shows plans for alterations and depicts a new entry on the east for apartments on the first floor (Malvern Building Plan 1925). Known residents of the flats throughout the late 1920s and 1930s include couple Dr Keith Douglas and Eileen Fairley (The Argus 1927, 1), and Elspeth Hannah (Table Talk 1934, 40). During this period, the reception rooms at Carmyle were also frequently used for social dances, fundraisers, parties and concerts (Table Talk 1934, 41; The Herald 1935, 14; Table Talk 1935, 43).

Due to the gap in historical material, it is difficult to ascertain precisely who occupied the flats between the 1940s and 1960s, although existing research indicates that Carmyle was used as medical consulting rooms for a period of time. By 1965, the entire property was listed for sale as a ‘2-Storey mansion divided into six flats’ in an auction advertisement (The Australian Jewish News 1965, 22). Ownership ultimately fell into the hands of Dr David Gunter and his wife Judy in 1968. The Gunter occupancy saw both the restoration of the property back into a private family residency, as well as the mansion’s transformation into a lively space for Melbourne’s music community. More recent articles note performances by renowned local and international artists such as Judith Durnam, Yalta Menuhin, Olaf Baer in the ballroom, as well as attendance by former Prime Minister Bob Hawke at an education dinner hosted at the mansion (Hayward 2019). The dwelling’s history of notable associations has been further reinforced by the musical successes of David and Judy’s children Penelope Gunther-Thallerman and Rupert Guenther. A cellist and violinist respectively, both Penelope and Rupert spent their youth rehearsing at the house and would go on to become internationally-acclaimed classical artists. The mansion remained in the Gunter family for over four decades, before being sold off in 2019.

Comparative Analysis

Designed in a conservative Italianate style, Carmyle is directly comparable to several mid to late 19th century Victorian mansions in Toorak. Popularised following the development of Toorak House in 1850 and its subsequent use as the Governor’s residence in 1854, the use of Italianate style in domestic architecture was particularly prevalent in the Victorian colony. Its connotations with the social and political elite was integral to its success, and the style is readily observable in residences across Melbourne’s wealthy inner eastern suburbs.

Comparable examples include:

- **Coonac (65 Clendon Road, Toorak) (HO21).** Coonac, formerly San Souci, was constructed in 1867 by owner Robert Bruce Ronald. The house is a comparable example to Carmyle as two

houses constructed in the Late Victorian Italianate style, exemplifying all of the characteristics associated with this period such as the form and scale, masonry construction and decorative stucco moulding. Across both mansions, the use of doric columns, arched loggias and arcaded verandahs signify wealth and status. A major feature of both sites include the use of decorative parapets concealing rooflines. The chief distinction between the sites, however, are in the heavily relandscaped grounds of Carmyle. While contemporary outdoor additions, in conjunction with the removal of mature plantings, have significantly altered Carmyle's original grounds, the recent additions at Coonac have not disturbed its highly established original landscape and mature plantings.

- **Whernside (2A Whernside Avenue, Toorak).** Though altered extensively by famed Arts and Crafts architect Harold Desbrowe-Anneer, Whernside still conveys its late Victorian design qualities. Characteristics shared by both Whernside and Carmyle include the use of rectilinear form, the use of brick masonry with stucco rendering, the hipped slate roof, polygonal bays and parapets. Both properties occupy idiosyncratic allotments, with Whernside in the bend of Whernside Avenue and the footpath of Carmyle Avenue directly abutting the building foundations on the front façade. This arrangement demonstrates the gradual subdivision of both properties and encroachment of development following the subdivision of Victorian estates in Stonnington.
- **Tintern (10 Tintern Avenue, Toorak) (HO105).** Tintern is a prefabricated iron house that was constructed in Glasgow and assembled onsite in 1855 for William Westgarth. The grand house would sustain significant extensions and alterations from 1896 onwards. Although it is a very different house from Carmyle, both buildings are comparable not only as 19th century houses, but also for their alterations and how they are received from the street. Carmyle, as established above, has the Carmyle Avenue footpath directly on the front door. This is also reflected at Tintern, where following the sale of the property to architect Walter Richmond Butler in 1902, Butler subdivided the sprawling estate and had the new Tintern Avenue constructed directly alongside the eastern wall. Both sites can be understood as testimonial reflections of the 20th century subdivisions of the Victorian estates in Toorak and the broader City of Stonnington.

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Limitations

1. Access to all heritage places was limited to a visual inspection from the public domain. The interiors of buildings and inaccessible areas such as rear gardens were not accessed as part of this heritage study.
2. Condition and site modification assessment was limited to a visual inspection undertaken from the public domain.
3. The historical notes provided for this citation are not considered to be an exhaustive history of the site.

Further Images



North eastern corner as viewed from Carmyle Avenue (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Eastern elevation as viewed from Carmyle Avenue (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Original façade, southern elevation (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Ballantyne and Hare alterations, as viewed on the southern elevation (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Decorative parapet design on the southern elevation (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Italianate chimney design (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Decorative parapet and Italianate chimney, as viewed on the northern elevation (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Decorative bay, as viewed on the southern elevation (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).

Authors

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