

## Heritage Citation – Individual Place

**Heritage Place:** Arundel

**Address:** 10 Chastleton Avenue, Toorak

**HO Reference:** HO18

**Citation status:** Final

**Date Updated:** 13 November 2023

**Designer:** Harold Desbrowe-Annear

**Year of Construction:** 1926-1927

**Builder:** Glover and Roberts



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



Location map and extent of HO18.

**Heritage Group:** Residential buildings

**Heritage Type:** House

**Key Theme:** Building Suburbs

**Key Sub-theme:** Creating Australia's most 'designed' suburbs – houses as a symbol of wealth, status and fashion

**Significance Level:** Local

**Recommendation:** Retain as an individually significant place on the HO

<b>Controls:</b>	<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 10 Chastleton Avenue, Toorak (otherwise known as Arundel) is significant. The scale, form, detailing and siting of the substantial Arts and Crafts Georgian Revival house, as well as the Interwar era garage and original front entrance gate, are of local significance.

The plantings and timber paling fence are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

Arundel is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington, and is associated with Chief Assistant Government Astronomer, Charles James Merfield.

### *Why is it significant?*

Arundel is historically significant as demonstrating the development of early 20th century mansions and houses within Toorak. The 1939 garage is historically important as demonstrating early 20th century parking facilities, during a time when the motor car was gaining popularity amongst the wealthy. (Criterion A)

Arundel is aesthetically significant as a highly intact and distinct Arts and Crafts Georgian Revival house. It is also important in exhibiting the principal aesthetic characteristics attributed to the later works of Harold Desbrowe-Anneer. These characteristics include: a rectilinear form; shallow-pitched gable roof; decorative floral plasterwork; a pillared portico or porch; and decorative elliptical windows. In the early 20th century and towards the end of Harold Desbrowe-Anneer's career, the aesthetic characteristics represented at Arundel became emblematic of Desbrowe-Anneer's Arts and Crafts Georgian Revival style. The garage was constructed in 1939 to the designs of another architect, and though not original to the site, still possesses aesthetic significance as a sympathetically designed outbuilding. (Criterion E)

Arundel has associative significance as the home of Charles James Merfield for whose family the house was built. Charles James Merfield was the Chief Assistant Government Astronomer and noted for his contributions to both astronomy research and railway engineering in Victoria and New South Wales. The house has remained under continual occupation and ownership by the Merfield family for almost a century. (Criterion H)

## HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	<i>Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history</i>	Arundel is historically significant as demonstrating the development of early 20th century mansions and houses within Toorak. The 1939 garage is historically important as demonstrating early 20th century parking facilities, during a time when the motor car was gaining popularity amongst the wealthy.
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>	<p>Arundel is aesthetically significant as a highly intact and distinct Arts and Crafts Georgian Revival house. It is also important in exhibiting the principal aesthetic characteristics attributed to the later works of Harold Desbrowe-Anneer. These characteristics include: a rectilinear form; shallow-pitched gable roof; decorative floral plasterwork; a pillared portico or porch; and decorative elliptical windows. In the early 20th century and towards the end of Harold Desbrowe-Anneer's career, the aesthetic characteristics represented at Arundel became emblematic of Desbrowe-Anneer's Arts and Crafts Georgian Revival style.</p> <p>The garage was constructed in 1939 to the designs of another architect, and though not original to the site, still possesses aesthetic significance as a sympathetically designed outbuilding.</p>
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>	Arundel has associative significance as the home of Charles James Merfield for whose family the house was built. Charles James Merfield was the Chief Assistant Government Astronomer and noted for his contributions to both astronomy research and railway engineering in Victoria and New South Wales. The house has remained under continual

## Description

### • Physical Analysis

Arundel is a double-storey yellow stucco rendered structure with a hipped roof. The footprint of the building addresses its corner lot location, breaking the typical axis of the buildings of the streetscape. The front façade-oriented northwest, facing Hill Street, is defined by a gable roofed central portico. The façade is symmetrical. The portico is supported by two wide Doric columns with a central opening which is mirrored by two engaged piers with the same form extruded from the main structure. The openings on the engage piers frame two small windows. The ground level has two double hung sash timber sash windows on each side of the portico. The portico is the location of the main entry door which is made of timber.

The upper level of the portico has three four-pane white timber fixed windows. An expressed timber frame sits above the string course and is applied above the stucco to create the appearance of blind openings under the windows. The gable front is embellished by a white festoon and cartouche moulding. There is a pair of two-pane fixed windows with a similar expressed timber frame on either side of the portico. The window profiles and forms are consistent on the southwest and northeast elevations. The eave profile is defined by a bracketed fascia and a timber box cornice behind the fascia. There are three stuccoed chimneys with a simple form projecting from the roof. The chimney on the south façade has two stainless steel chimney pots. There are hipped moulding embellishments located on the façades under the eaves and between the ground and first floor windows.

The grounds of Arundel are landscaped with an expanse of lawn on the north side of the property. The south portion of the property houses a double garage. The garage has maroon roller doors but the form, parapet moulding, stucco finish and colour is somewhat consistent with the main dwelling. The street boundary is demarcated by an unoriginal timber paling fence. However, the original white timber gate entrance and gate posts has been retained and is located off Chastleton Avenue. The street boundary is also defined by dense plantings of tall, clipped bushes and two mature cacti (*cactaceae*).

10 Chastleton Avenue is currently used as a residential property. The landscape has been moderately modified with an array of mature introduced plant species as well as the addition of a garage and shed. However, the form and detailing on the main structure remain intact and the property is considered to be of high integrity.

### • Alterations and Additions

- Stainless steel chimney pots.
- Addition of roof antenna.
- Downpipes replaced.
- Sympathetic two door garage addition (Interwar style).
- Garden shed.
- Timber paling fence.

## 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

This double-storey, six room brick house, named Arundel, was built between 1926 and 1927 for Margaret Ada Merfield and Charles James Merfield (Pahran Rate Book 1926-27). Charles Merfield is a historically significant figure, working in the late 19th century and early 20th century as one of Australia's best known astronomers, and then later Chief Assistant Astronomer for the Melbourne Observatory (Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences). A 1927 drainage plan shows the property bounded by Chastleton Avenue and Hill Street. The agents, Glover and Roberts of Hampton, are recorded in a 1926 letter from Desbrowe-Annear to the Merfields. The property has since remained in the hands of the Merfield family. In 1951-52 it was owned and occupied by Miss Isabella H. Mabel Merfield, librarian, and her brother, Theon, and was still described as a six-roomed brick house (Pahran Rate Book 1951-1952). In 1928, Charles James Merfield, astronomer; Margaret Merfield, home duties; Zeus Amphion Merfield, physicist; Mabel Isabel Merfield, teacher; and Theon Numa Merfield, were living at Chasleton Avenue (Fawkner Electoral Roll, 1928).

Arundel was designed by Harold Desbrowe-Annear, as evidenced by documentation provided by the Merfield family on inspection of the house. A tender notice in Building and Construction 1926, for a residence in Hill Street, architect H. Desbrowe-Annear, seems likely to also relate to the Merfield property (Building and Construction, 11 May, 1926). Annear, a notable interwar domestic architect designed a number of Toorak residences for wealthy families. He is widely recognised as an early Australian Modernist (Boyd, 1967, p. 457). His background in engineering lead him to design and patent

several architectural devices such as window mechanisms and chimneys (Desbrowe-Annear, 1922, p. 48-50). He also co-designed the Church Street Bridge in Prahran.

### Comparative Analysis

The works of Harold Desbrowe-Annear can be separated into two distinct stylistic trends. With this, though Desbrowe-Annear worked prolifically in Stonnington, he is represented more so by his earlier Arts and Crafts design than his later Georgian Revival style. The following comparable examples work to highlight the significance of Arundel by addressing each stylistic feature representative of Desbrowe-Annear's Georgian Revival themes evident in his designs across Stonnington and further away in Darebin.

Comparable examples include:

- **Katanga (372 Glenferrie Road, Malvern) (HO41).** Katanga was commenced in 1931 and completed in 1933 just before the death of Desbrowe-Annear. The house shares a similar form with Arundel and both represent Georgian Revival styling with Arts and Crafts influences. The square rectilinear form with a pillared portico at Katanga is represented at Arundel. What is more, both houses share deep boxed eaves, rendered cartouche detailing, and decorative elliptical windows. The use of render at both sites is also a common element. A difference between both sites is the orientation of Arundel – with Arundel occupying a footprint where it addresses its corner lot location, breaking with the more conventional axis that Katanga abides by.
- **Former M H Baillieu House (729 Orrong Road, Toorak) (HO510).** Constructed in 1926 for Maurice Baillieu of the well known dynastic Baillieu family, the house at 729 Orrong Road Toorak is a clear comparable example to Arundel as representing Desbrowe-Annear's later Georgian Revival styling. The Former Baillieu House at 729 Orrong Road is a large, rectilinear house with a projecting gable, forming a decorative pediment complete with elliptical window and plaster swags draping either side of the window. In this period, Desbrowe-Annear was making use of decorative plasterwork and floral arrangements, and this is shown more so at Orrong Road than at Arundel. However, the use of decorative elliptical windows is shown at Katanga, Arundel, the Lear House and Orrong Road. The use of a low-pitch gable is also evident at Orrong Road and Arundel, with chimneys reserved for the outer walls.
- **House and Doctor's Surgery (Former) (572 Plenty Road, Preston) (HO242).** The house and doctor's surgery, formerly the Lear House, was constructed in 1932 for Dr. Darcy Lear just before Desbrowe-Annear's passing. The Lear House presents similar design qualities represented at Katanga, Arundel and the Former Baillieu House – those being the rectilinear form, shallow pitched hipped roof, deep eaves, decorative window design and the use of floral plasterwork. All of these features reflect Desbrowe-Annear's Georgian Revival design. The Lear House is different however from the other three examples, where the above three places have porticos or porches, the Lear House has an enclosed entrance foyer, projecting from the façade as if it were a porch.

It is worth noting that stylistically, Arundel shares many similar features to another highly significant Desbrowe-Annear house in Toorak, that being Cloyne at 611 Toorak Road, Toorak. Cloyne represents the transition from Desbrowe-Annear's Arts and Crafts themes to Georgian forms, comprising a rectilinear form with unorthodox vertices on the front façade. The use of decorative windows, a portico

with Doric columns, deep eaves and a shallow-pitched gabled roof are all comparable to Arundel. This comparative analysis works illustrate that Arundel at 10 Chastleton Avenue is representative of Desbrowe-Annear's Georgian Revival design, and is highly significant when reviewed against comparable examples.

## References

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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



Front façade, looking east (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Front façade, looking south east (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of decorative plasterwork (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Southern elevation, looking north east (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of chimneys (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of southern windows (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



View of portico (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Decorative elliptical window (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Interwar garage, dated 1939 (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Side view of portico (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).

## Authors

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