

## Heritage Citation – Individual Place

**Heritage Place:** Former Elgin Hall Guest House

**Address:** 21 Elgin Avenue, Armadale

**HO Reference:** HO36

**Citation status:** Final

**Date Updated:** 22 March 2022

**Designer:** Unknown

**Year of Construction:** 1899-1900

**Builder:** Victorian Permanent Building Society



Photograph of Former Elgin Hall Guest House (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Location map and extent of HO36.

**Heritage Group:** Residential buildings

**Heritage Type:** Mansion

**Key Theme:** Building 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.

<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 21 Elgin Avenue, Armadale (otherwise known as Former Elgin Hall Guest House) is significant. Specifically, the form, scale, setback and detailing of the substantial 1899-1900 Victorian Italianate mansion is locally significant. The front fence, landscaping and later alterations and additions to the properties are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

Former Elgin Hall Guest House is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

### *Why is it significant?*

Former Elgin Hall Guest House is of historical significance in demonstrating the development of mansions on estates in the suburb of Armadale by Melbourne's wealthiest citizens during the late 19th and early 20th century, prior to the wider subdivision of the late Victorian estates. (Criterion A)

Former Elgin Hall Guest House has strong aesthetic significance as a highly intact and fine example of a grand Italianate boom-era mansion set on a substantial portion of land. Key aesthetic qualities include the scale of the building, the deep setback from the street, the wraparound wrought iron verandah, projecting bays, hipped roof and decorative parapet complete with urns and balustrading. (Criterion E)

## HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	<i>Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history</i>	Former Elgin Hall Guest House is of historical significance in demonstrating the development of mansions on estates in the suburb of Armadale by Melbourne's wealthiest citizens during the late 19th and early 20th century, prior to the wider subdivision of the late Victorian estates.
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>	Former Elgin Hall Guest House has strong aesthetic significance as a highly intact and fine example of a grand Italianate boom-era mansion set on a substantial portion of land. Key aesthetic qualities include the scale of the building, the deep setback from the street, the wraparound wrought iron verandah,

		projecting bays, hipped roof and decorative parapet complete with urns and balustrading.
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

Former Elgin Hall Guest House is a large two-storey Victorian Italianate mansion. The masonry structure has a rendered façade and a mostly hipped slate roof. The main structure presents symmetrically with a double storey extension wing to the east corner of the house. The front west façade has a prominent wide return verandah. The verandah features paired cast iron posts with high detailed valance and lace. The verandah awning and parts of the main roof are clad in corrugated galvanised iron sheeting.

There are a pair of projecting bay windows, typical to the Italianate style, located within the verandah on each level. The windows in the bays and on the façade are a white timber framed double hung sash window. Each window has an arched form and is emphasised by the string course that runs along the façade of each level. There is a bracketed cornice above the verandah awning that sits under the balustraded flat parapet with balusters. The parapet steps up in line with the projecting bays below and is capped with ball finials. The hipped roof is hidden behind the parapet. At the centre of the main roof is a monitor roof, square in plan with a pitched roof clad in glass sheeting. There are three rendered Italianate style chimneys extending from the main roof and a fourth from the south extension.

The rear (east) elevation is simple in detail with double hung sash windows. In between the two-storey south east extension and the main structure is a single-storey extension with a hipped corrugated iron roof. The extension has a full-length casement windows with top fanlight.

The street front boundary is demarcated by a chamfered timber post and corrugated iron fence. There is a main entrance and car entrance located along the fence in the similar style and colour as the main fence. The grounds of the property are landscaped. There are several mature trees, particularly along the north and south boundary fences. The mansion is set back from the street and separated by a broad expanse of uninterrupted lawn. There is a cactus and succulent garden located on the southern side of the residence as well as a lap pool and pool house. There is a paved garden area with timber pergolas

located off the east and north sides of the house. There is also a private garden demarcated with a tall hedge wall in the north east corner of the property.

Former Elgin Hall Guest House is located at the end of the street off the main thoroughfare of High Street. It is currently used as a private residential property. The main structure is in good condition. Despite having several extensions to the south and east sides, the mansion appears largely intact and has high integrity.

- [Alterations and Additions](#)

- Two-storey south east wing extension added.
- Single storey east wing extension added.
- Lap pool, timber deck and pool house added.
- Corrugated iron roofing replaced on the verandah awning.
- Corrugated iron roofing added to parts of the primary roof.
- Skylights and air-conditioning units added to the primary roof.
- Glass roof added over the monitor roof.
- Paved area to the north and east side of the main structure.
- Timber pergolas added.
- Cactus and succulent garden added.
- Timber post and corrugated iron boundary wall added.

## [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.

The first land sales in what would become Armadale began in 1854 following the surveying of Glenferrie Road and High Street. The suburb of Armadale was formally included in the City of Prahran and, as is the case with many of the suburbs in Stonnington and surrounds, it received its name from a lone but notable property. Armadale House was built by one James Munro, son of the first keeper of the Prahran pound. On arriving in Australia from his home in Sutherland, Scotland, Munro worked for the stationer business Fergusson and Moore—Fergusson being James Fergusson of Kooyong. Armadale House, built in c.1887, was the first of many grand houses constructed in the suburb in the late 19th century. Munro went on to become Premier of Victoria and, later, Attorney General, before losing all in the economic crash of the 1890s. Following the turn of the century, many of the original 19th century properties faced demolition and subdivision, encouraging growth in early 20th century and the interwar period. While Armadale today enjoys an affluent reputation for its association with the surrounding suburbs of Toorak, Malvern and Kooyong, traces of remnant working class houses can be seen at the small timber workers cottages present in some parts off High Street and near the border with Malvern (Cooper 1924, 268).

- **Place History**

21 Elgin Avenue was built in 1899-1900 by the Victorian Permanent Building Society for Mary Windsor. The Victorian Permanent Building Society was founded in 1865 by James Munro. Common during the 19th century, building societies were established to encourage home ownership amongst working men through the strategic loaning and borrowing of funds (Davison 2008). While these societies secured funds for working class home buyers, historians have noted that a significant portion of funds often ended up in the hands of middle-class land speculators (Jackson 1984, 28-38). The Victorian Permanent Building Society became the largest building society in Melbourne and was responsible for the erection of a significant number of properties by early 20th century.

As indicated in the 1902 MMBW plan, the property was initially situated on the east side of Elgin Avenue (then Wynnstay Avenue) next to the sixteen room mansion Wynnstay, with stables at the rear and an entrance from Wynnstay Avenue (MMBW 1902). On this plan, the house is named Elgin. While Mary Windsor was the official owner, records indicate that she leased it to draper Thomas Wallace during the dwelling's initial years. Windsor remained the owner until at least 1913. By 1915, the occupier and owner of Elgin was recorded as Robert J Wyles (Sands & McDougall). Wyles' occupancy lasted at least a decade, before ownership was transferred onto Ada Triado from c. 1930 (Sands & McDougall). Due to the lack of archival material, little is known about the occupants nor the dwelling during this historical period.

From around 1940, Elgin became known as the Elgin Hall Guest House. It was subsequently purchased for £30,000 by R. C. Trust Corp., in the 1960s. From this period onwards until at least 1974, it was tenanted by Reverend Fr. Andrew Zoltan Varga and used by the Hungarian Youth Club. In 1959/60, £1,300 was spent on alterations and in 1964, £4,500 was spent on brick veneer alterations (City of Prahan Rate Books).

### **Comparative Analysis**

Former Elgin Hall Guest House is a remnant feature of Armadale's historical turn of the century landscape, prior to the subdivision of the Victorian estates. Due to its proximity to a number of substantial late Victorian mansions, Elgin is directly comparable to a collection of mansions that are not only architecturally similar, but also inform the building's historical value.

Comparable examples include:

- **Trelowarren formerly known as Kilbryde (west side of Orrong Road north of Lalbert Cres, 543 Orrong Road, Armadale) (HO86).** Built in 1876-77 for Robert D. Reid, merchant and member of the Victorian Legislative Council who would later become a Senator, Trelowarren is directly comparable to Elgin as a mansion built in the late Victorian style, formerly on a large estate dating from the late 19th century. Trelowarren directly reflects a period of rich development and expansion, informing Elgin's construction and providing a remnant landscape context for Elgin. Today, both houses provided historical evidence of Armadale prior to the subdivision of the 19th century estates.
- **Larnook (519 Orrong Road, Armadale) (HO85).** Built in 1881 for W. H. Miller, banker and son of Henry 'Money' Miller, Larnook is comparable to Elgin as a late 19th century boom-era Italianate

mansion formerly on a large estate. Like Trelowarran, Larnook contextualises the historical setting of Elgin and provides evidence of Armadale prior to the subdivision of the Victorian estate, and a landscape that no longer exists.

- **Former Sebrof House (514 Orrong Road) (HO84).** Built circa 1884 for William Williams, merchant, the house would later be owned by the Forbes family who renamed it Sebrof. Former Sebrof House is directly comparable to that Elgin as both houses are key examples of late Victorian Italianate mansions built on large estates in the late 19th century in Armadale. Former Sebrof House directly reflects a period of rich development and expansion, informing Elgin's construction and providing a remnant landscape context for Elgin. Today, both houses provided historical evidence of Armadale prior to the subdivision of the 19th century estates.

## 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



North western corner of Former Elgin Hall Guest House (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Parapet details (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Streetscape view from Elgin Avenue (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Street plantings obscuring visuals of Former Elgin Hall Guest House (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).

## Authors

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