

Heritage Citation – Individual Place

Heritage Place: Redcourt
Address: 506 Orrong Road, Armadale

HO Reference: HO166
Citation status: Final
Date Updated: 24 October 2023
Year of Construction: 1887-88

Designer: Reed Henderson & Smart
Builder: Unknown



Photograph of Redcourt (source: www.federationhome.com).



Location map and extent of HO166.

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 506 Orrong Road, Armadale (otherwise known as Redcourt) is significant. The form, scale, setback and detailing of the substantial Queen Anne Revival mansion is of local significance. The landscaping, outbuildings and front fence are not significant.

How is it significant?

Redcourt is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Redcourt is of historical importance in demonstrating the development of late 19th century mansions and houses within the suburb of Armadale, prior to the wider subdivision of the late Victorian and Edwardian estates. The mansion is also of historical significance in demonstrating residential development in the south eastern suburbs by Melbourne's wealthiest citizens during the boom era period. (Criterion A)

Redcourt is aesthetically significant as an intact and visually distinct late 19th century Queen Anne Revival mansion designed by the architectural firm Reed, Henderson & Tappin. These characteristics include the use of complex roofscape, terracotta tiles, the asymmetrical form, decorative timberwork and harling render on the projecting gable ends, the use of red brick masonry, the use of leadlight and textured glass windows, and decorative chimneys. All of these features, combined with the sheer scale and setback of the mansion, work to produce a highly distinct and cohesive example of a late 19th century Queen Anne Revival mansion. (Criterion E)

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	<i>Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history</i>	Redcourt is of historical importance in demonstrating the development of late 19th century mansions and houses within the suburb of Armadale, prior to the wider subdivision of the late Victorian and Edwardian estates. The mansion is also of historical significance in demonstrating residential development in the south eastern suburbs by Melbourne's wealthiest citizens during the boom era 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>	Redcourt is aesthetically significant as an intact and visually distinct late 19th century Queen Anne Revival mansion designed by the architectural firm Reed, Henderson & Tappin. These characteristics include the complex roofscape, the use of terracotta tiles, the asymmetrical form, decorative timberwork and harling render on the projecting gable ends, the use of red brick masonry, the use of leadlight and textured glass windows, and decorative chimneys. All of these features, combined with the sheer scale and setback of the mansion, work to produce a highly distinct and cohesive example of a late 19th century Queen Anne Revival mansion.
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

Redcourt is a large two-storey mansion built in a Queen Anne Revival style. The house occupies an elevated site overlooking the intersection from which it presents a long frontage to Orrong Road. The masonry structure consists of red face brick laid in a stretcher bond. The base of the structure is expressed by a two-course blockwork and three course yellow brick foundation. The building has a double pitched roof oriented north with several open gable ends projecting from it. The left pitched roof has five projecting gables facing west forming the front façade. The right pitched roof has two projecting gables facing east. Most of the roof is clad in terracotta tiles, however the inner roof has been reclad in corrugated galvanised iron. There are seven large, red face brick chimneys projecting from the roof featuring brick strapwork and corbelled detailing expressed in yellow brick.

The front façade, facing Orrong Road, presents asymmetrically with the broad length of the façade interrupted by the half-timbered gables. The main entrance is located in the rightmost gable and is located under a pedimented projecting awning with similar detailing as the projecting half-timber gables

above. The front door is raised and accessible up three steps flanked by a low balustrade wall. There is a white timber casement window with a fixed two pane toplight with a concrete sill and flat gauged arch in yellow brick. The gable is supported to the right by a long timber support bracket painted white that is triangular in profile.

The central gable is the tallest and widest gable on the front façade. The ground level has a wide seven-pane timber casement window with corresponding fanlights in an arched form. The arched form is emphasised by a window head. Centered to the ground level window and leading up from the keystone of the arch window head is the feature framed oriel window. The oriel window has four casement windows and corresponding square leadlight toplights. The oriel window sits under the projecting gable with a louvred rectangular vent. The gable is supported by a similar timber support bracket.

To the left of the central gable is another projection extending forward with a paired gable. The ground level presents two centered white timber double hung sash windows with toplight. The windows are located under a terracotta shingled awning supported by two paired brackets similar in style to the larger brackets supporting the neighbouring projecting gables. The red brickwork of the ground level terminates under the half timber first level and is emphasised by paired sets of four vertical recesses on the brickwork façade. The second level features a four arched bay verandah with two centered French doors.

The next bay to the left is set back from the projecting paired gable to the right. Two timber sash windows with a six pane toplight, concrete sill and yellow brick flat gauged arch are located on each level. The left most gable fully supports the chimney breast which at ground level is as long as the gable length. The façade detailing including the window frame, timber gable frame, fascias and exposed rafter ends are painted white in contrast with the red brick façade.

The south elevation features a covered porch and first level verandah. The wide return verandah wraps around to the east elevation and terminates at the second projecting gable. The verandah awning is clad in corrugated galvanised iron. The verandah structure is supported by thin square cast iron columns with a decorative valance and lace painted in black. The west elevation gables present detailing similar to the gables on the front façade.

The north elevation features a group of three arched narrow windows with arched brick window heads on the ground level of the right pitched roof wing. The north elevation faces a group of adjoining buildings that includes three garages, a two-storey workshop and laundry. The buildings are constructed in a similar red open face brick with yellow brick courses on each level at sill height. The windows on the structure are timber double hung sash windows. There is a set of timber stairs that lead up to the first level entrance. The entrance is capped by a flush checkered red and yellow brick motif with a yellow brick arch and a projecting gable awning with a timber bracket. The pitched roofs of the external structures have been reclad in corrugated galvanised iron. There is a new garage extension in between the external building and the main house with a flat roof clad in solar panels.

The street front boundary of Redcourt is demarcated by a tall polychrome brick wall laid in a stretcher bond; it does not appear to be original. The wall is capped with a yellow brick header course and extended with a black palisade fence with a black privacy screen. The main entrance to the property is located at the north end of the wall. The entrance is recessed and flanked by four corbelled piers. The vehicle entrance gates have a decorative privacy screen. The right pier to the gate has a cast iron name

plate reading 'REDCOURT 506' with a stylised 'RC' logo in engraved lettering. There is a small section of timber panel fencing at the north end of the front wall which could have been a replacement due to damage to the brick wall from the mature fig tree located directly behind it. The street front wall is backed by dense tree and hedge planting that almost completely obscures views of the house from street level.

The grounds of Redcourt are landscaped with a large expanse of lawn along the street front side where a tennis court was once located. There are mature trees on the property including a large fig tree by the front entrance gate, pine trees and a stand of palm trees by the front entrance. There is a driveway laid in river pebble screed that leads to the garages off the north side of the property and to a turning circle area by the front door to the main house. The former tennis court lawn is located at a lower ground level to the rest of the property. The lawn is bounded by the street front wall to the west and a distinct battered wall with wide engaged piers to the east. The wall has seating at the lawn level between the pier bays and is accessible from the upper ground level by a set of wide steps flanked by groups of palm tree plantings. The upper section of the wall is laid vertically with perforated brickwork breaking the battered slope form. There is a tennis house located by the lawn. The lawn is lined on the north, west and south perimeter by a line of pencil pine trees.

Redcourt is located on Orrong Road in front of the junction with Karbarook Avenue and close to the Princes Highway. Redcourt is currently used as a residential property. Images from a 2014 residential listing show the timber detailing on the façade in poor condition. However, recent documentation shows that it has recently been restored faithfully. The structure can be said to be in good condition. There has been minor modification to the main structure and intrusive elements such as the verandah infill have been removed. The main and additional structures have also been reroofed. Redcourt can be considered to have high integrity.

- **Alterations and Additions**

- First-storey verandah infilled removed (after 2013).
- Interior main roof reclad in corrugated galvanised iron.
- Three skylights added to the main roof.
- Air conditioning units added to the main roof.
- Two water tanks added to the main roof.
- Return verandah awning reclad in corrugated galvanised iron.
- Roofing of outbuildings reclad in corrugated galvanised iron.
- New garage extension with flat roof.
- Green roller garage doors added.
- Solar panels added to flat roof garage extension.
- Palisade fencing with privacy screen added to front wall (after 2014).
- New entrance gates with privacy screen added (after 2014).
- Replacement timber panel fencing section on the north end of the front wall.
- New pebble screed driveway (after 2009).

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

A significant history of Redcourt at 506 Orrong Road has previously been authored by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd and Di Foster in 1998. The following place history draws primarily from this existing citation, and is augmented by revisions and supplementary research by Extent Heritage.

Redcourt was formerly part of the four allotments bounded by Dandenong Road, Kooyong Road, High Street and Orrong Road that were sold at the Crown Land Sale in 1850. Lot 65 at the corner of Dandenong Road and Orrong Road extended to south of the present day Bernato Grove and east to Denbigh Road. By 1887, William Miller was the owner of six acres of land at Dandenong Road on the east corner of Orrong Road. Five acres of this land was subsequently purchased by prominent glass and timber merchant Edward Lowenstein Yencken in 1887, and in 1887-1888, a substantial built house was erected to designs by architectural firm Reed Henerson & Smart. Yencken was a successful businessman for the company Brooks, Robinson & Co. by the time Redcourt was erected, and ultimately founded his own business E.L. Yencken & Co in 1893. He leased the house to squatter John Turnbull in 1892, before selling it to Mrs E. J. Robinson in 1895 (Prahan Rate Books).

By 1900, the net annual value of Robinson's property had dropped to £500 and merchant Ernest Connell was the occupier (Prahan Rate Books). It was given the name Redcourt around this period, and a 1902 MMBW plan reveals an entrance at the corner of Orrong Road and Dandenong Road, as well as a sweeping carriage-drive, conservatory, summer house, formal gardens and stables at the property (Sands & McDougall 1901; MMBW 1902). In 1905, the property was owned by Theresa Wallace and

occupied by Ada Wallace (Prahan Rate Books). Wallace's ownership of the dwelling only lasted a few years, and by at least 1912, Australian grazier and politician Norman Falkiner and his wife Mary Louise (née Smithwick) were listed as the official owner and occupier of Redcourt (then numbered 347 Dandenong Road) (Prahan Rate Book; The Bulletin 1912).

By 1930, Redcourt was purchased by businessman, philanthropist and real estate agent Thomas Michael Burke. Listed as having thirty rooms, Burke's ownership subsequently culminated in the subdivision of the Redcourt Estate and the creation of Redcourt Avenue in c.1936 (Prahan Rate Book; Hannan 1979). A notable agent in the area, Burke was also responsible for several large subdivisions of land in the Gardiners Creek Valley at East Malvern, including the land for the East Malvern Golf Course. Following subdivision, Redcourt was given the name Redcourt Guesthouse and re-numbered 6 Orrong Road by 1940. The guesthouse was run by Mabel Irvine. Thomas Burke remained the owner of Redcourt until his death in 1949, in which ownership was subsequently transferred to his wife Mary Duggan Burke (née Brady).

Following Mary's death, Redcourt was put up for auction in 1956. An advertisement for the house from this period describes it as a brick mansion with twenty-three main rooms and staff quarters (The Argus 1956, 22). It was subsequently purchased by the State Government of Victoria's Ministry of Education, and used as an all girls residence for students enrolled at the Larnook Domestic Arts Teachers College (Sands & McDougall). It was ultimately vacated and left to deteriorate in 1996, before being purchased by developer Adam Garrison in 2009. This resulted in a four year long restoration project to return the building to a family residence, as well as significant renovations to the kitchen interior, music room and children's room (Pallisco and Power 2015). Following refurbishment, it was placed on the market in 2013, and again in 2014 (Engwirda 2014).

Comparative Analysis

Redcourt is notable as a fine and very early example of the influence of the British Queen Anne Revival, exemplified by the contemporary work of Richard Norman Shaw in London, as well as Oakden, Addison & Kemp, Walter Richmond Butler and Ussher & Kemp in Melbourne. While Reed Henderson & Smart are not well known for such work, they are recognised as innovators in style in the nineteenth century, and were no doubt well abreast of the latest stylistic developments in Britain and Australia.

Comparative examples include:

- **Campion College (formerly Dalswraith), (99 Studley Park Road, Kew) (H0158).** The house formerly known as Dalswraith is described in its statement of significance as being one of the most scholarly and bold expressions of the Queen Anne style of house built during the Edwardian period in Melbourne. The house is a two-storey structure with a gabled roof and projecting gable ends. A central arcaded loggia provides a recessed entrance, constructed out of the sandstone while the rest of the house is completed in red brick with timber cladding on the bay windows, and a mix of timber and harling render used on the gable ends. Terracotta tiles are present on the roof, with decorative ridge capping. All of these elements are represented at Redcourt, other than the sandstone loggia and ridge capping. Both houses can be recognised as clear and identifiable examples of the Queen Anne style reflected during the Edwardian period in Melbourne.

- **Former North Park (69 Woodland Street, Essendon) (HO128 and VHR No. H1286).** The house formerly known as North Park is directly comparable to Redcourt as another example of an Queen Anne style house constructed in the Edwardian period in Melbourne. Both houses share similar characteristics, including the use of red brick masonry, projecting gabled bays, gable ends with timber and harling render, terracotta tiling for roofing material and built form.
- **Edzell (76 St Georges Road, Toorak) (HO101 and VHR No. H0691).** Edzell was originally constructed in 1892 to the designs of Reed, Smart and Tappin. However, the substantial house was extensively remodeled in 1917. The Butler alterations are evident and recognisable with Butler's design – however, the house still observes many similar characteristics attributable to Reed, Smart and Tappin that are directly comparable to Redcourt. These characteristics include the use of projecting gable ends with decorative art nouveau timberwork, terracotta tiling, form, asymmetry and the use of render and red brick.

These examples are directly indebted to the Queen Anne Revival sponsored by Richard Norman Shaw, Philip Webb and other architects in England from the 1870s. Their style is not to be confused with Melbourne's more typical Queen Anne, which is most often single-storey and sprawled across the site in a manner quite alien to English prototypes.

Redcourt is clearly one of the earliest examples of the mode for a substantial house in the metropolitan area. While not as grand as Dalswraith in terms of materials or as large as North Park, it is clearly of a similar scale, integrity and degree of innovation. Redcourt may well have just preceded North Park in design and construction, and thus may be the earliest major example in Melbourne.

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



Entry gates to Redcourt (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Brick wall and plantings visible on the Orrong Road boundary (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Redcourt front façade looking north east
(source:www.federationhome.com, n.d.).



Redcourt front façade looking south east
(source:www.federationhome.com, n.d.).



Façade and landscaping. (federationhome.com)

Authors

Former citation prepared by: Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, 1998.

Updated citation prepared by: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2022.