

Heritage Citation – Individual Place

Heritage Place: Residence
Address: 29 Lansell Road, Toorak

HO Reference: HO727
Citation status: Final
Date Updated: 12 April 2022
Year of Construction: c.1940

Designer: Unknown
Builder: Unknown



Photograph of 29 Lansell Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Location map and extent of 29 Lansell Road.

Heritage Group: Residential building
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: Recommended for the Heritage Overlay as an individual place; fence controls are recommended in relation to the front boundary fence and gates.

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 checked="" 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 29 Lansell Road, Toorak is significant. Specifically, the form, scale, setback and detailing of the English Domestic Revival residence is of local significance, along with the front boundary wall and gates. The landscaping and later alterations and additions to the property are not significant.

How is it significant?

29 Lansell Road is of local aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

29 Lansell Road is aesthetically significant as a highly unique and substantially intact example of an English Domestic Revival style residence with an original front fence. Unlike more conventional examples of this style, it is unusual in its mixed use of circular and rectilinear built and roof forms, which combine to create a visually striking and picturesque structure. Other key architectural features contributing towards its aesthetic value include the three tall face brick chimneys, slate tile roof, brick corbel detailing below the roof eaves, a deep setback from the street on a descending gradient from street level which emphasises the unusual roof form, and an original face brick fence with wrought iron gates. The residence is further enhanced by the landscape setting at the front of the building which includes curved brick retaining walls and gardens, and curved brick driveway. (Criterion E)

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	<i>Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history</i>	This place does not meet this criterion.
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>	29 Lansell Road is aesthetically significant as a highly unique and substantially intact example of an English Domestic Revival style residence with an original front fence. Unlike more conventional examples of this style, it is unusual in its mixed use of circular and rectilinear built and roof forms, which combine to create a visually striking and picturesque structure. Other key architectural features contributing towards its aesthetic value include the three tall face brick

		chimneys, slate tile roof, brick corbel detailing below the roof eaves, a deep setback from the street on a descending gradient from street level which emphasises the unusual roof form, and an original face brick fence with wrought iron gates. The residence is further enhanced by the landscape setting at the front of the building which includes curved brick retaining walls and gardens, and curved brick driveway.
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

The residence at 29 Lansell Road is a two-storey structure built in an English Domestic Revival style. The face brown brick structure is laid with a stretcher bond, while the rounded south projecting portion of the building is laid with a header bond. The structure is primarily defined by a complex hipped roof and roof ridge clad in slate tiles, as well as brick corbel detailing below the roof eaves. The roof features three tall open face brick chimneys located along the north side of the main roof which form a strong vertical feature of the structure, while the roof form itself is characteristic of the English Domestic style with its prominent steeply pitched appearance. This is particularly evident on the south elevation with the roof dropping to a low level at the main entrance portico.

The façade is stepped and includes a curved wall and low roof profile, both elements of which are notable from the street due to the slope of the site. The fenestration includes rectangular casement windows of varying sizes, including a semi-circular bay window with a metal roof on the façade at ground level and a large double casement window flanked with timber louvered shutters on the upper level.

The main entrance is located on the south (side) elevation. It is raised up and accessible via concrete steps with raised brick garden beds leading to the brick portico entrance. The portico entrance is sheltered under a bullnosed corrugated metal awning. Located behind the main entrance is the curved

projecting wall which contrasts with the form of the rest of the original structure. A two-storey extension adjoins the original structure at the rear. The brick extension is recessive in scale and placement behind the main structure, with similar fenestration and a terracotta tiled hipped roof which connects to the main roof. A two-storey flat roof addition built of brick with a corrugated iron roof also sits directly behind the original building in the south-west corner. It is not readily visible from the street. Additionally, there is a freestanding building with a gable and hipped roof to the south-west of the main structure. This is not original but is also recessive.

The residence has a deep setback from the street and sits on a descending gradient from street level. The street front boundary is demarcated by a tall polychrome brick wall laid with a stretcher bond. It also contains alternating recessed thin brick courses and is capped with thin chamfered bricks. The wall includes three original gates including two car entrance gates. The gates consist of decorative green wrought iron with loop tops, a feature which is mirrored in the wrought iron fence attached to the top of the wall. The only non-original element of the gates is the upright metal posts which were installed to allow the driveway gates to automatically swing. The gates are flanked with rounded bricks posts with polychrome vertical laid thin bricks that are topped with large cast iron urn lamps.

The gates open up to the curved red brick laid driveway and path leading to the main entrance and garage structure. The front lawn is terraced with brick retaining walls in a curved form, and also includes a curved and circular formal rose garden, as well as brick paths and edging along the south boundary. The landscaping to the rear of the building has a raised brick patio which overlooks the swimming pool. Beyond the swimming pool is an expanse of lawn with a curved path leading to the lawn tennis court. There are numerous mature trees on the property, particularly along the south, north and west boundary.

29 Lansell Road is located close to the junction with Tahara Road. The property is currently used as a private residence and is considered to be in good condition. The main structure has been altered at the rear with a major two-storey extension. However, these extensions are visually recessive and relatively obscured from street view. The property has also been relandscaped with the addition of a two-storey freestanding structure as well as some other facilities. The site is considered to be of moderate integrity overall, however the front façade and front landscape are of high integrity.

- [Alterations and Additions](#)

- Two-storey rear extension (2013).
- Skylights added to the original main roof (2013).
- Freestanding building added to the south-west of the main structure (2002).
- Swimming pool added (before 2001).
- Lawn tennis court added (2002).
- Driveway gates altered to enable an automatic swing function.

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

The land on which 29 Lansell Road sits was formerly of the grounds of the noted 1849 residence Toorak House. Following the property's purchase by Bendigo mining entrepreneur George Lansell in 1874, its land was subdivided to create the elegantly winding streets of Lansell Road and St Georges Road. According to historian Di Foster, George Lansell's subdivision was aimed specifically for the gentry of Victoria, and the sale of land in this area quickly attracted wealthy pastoralists, merchants and professionals who chose this prestigious area to build their mansions (Foster c.1996). While the Toorak House Estate was subject to additional subdivisions over the 19th century, the subject lot comprising present day 29 Lansell Road remained vacant into the 20th century. Notably, the price of land in Toorak rose considerably in the interwar period, with newspapers reporting that the land of on Lansell Road with a frontage of 100 feet, which in 1918 cost £12 a foot, was worth £35 a foot by 1937 (The Argus 1937, 13).

While the architect and precise date of construction has not been determined, historical directories list the first owner of the residence as an individual named John Heffernan in 1940 (Sands & McDougall 1940). By 1946, D.I. Hartley is listed as resident in 1945. Hartley's occupation is further confirmed in a 1946 newspaper article, which reports the theft of jewelry and a fur cape, to a total value of £300, from the home of Mr D. Hartley in Lansell Road (The Argus 1946, 6). As with Heffernan, Hartley's time at the residence only lasted several years, with Leon Grodeck listed as the official occupier by 1950. From 1955 onwards, Alexander and Dora Maclean are listed as the residents of 29 Lansell Road (The Age 1953, 9).

Alexander's occupation is given as 'manager', and Dora's as 'home-duties' (Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980). The Macleans lived at the property until Dora Maclean's death in c.1981.

Following Maclean's death, James Samuel Gibson became the official executor and trustee of the residence. It was soon sold to an individual named Don McDermott in c.1981 (Andrew Stirling & Associates 1981). Notably, this change in ownership saw several alterations, additions and restorations to the building's western elevation, including an upper storey deck, balcony and associated timber clad balustrade, as well as a ground floor cantilevered verandah (Andrew Stirling & Associates 1981). Designed by building consultants Andrew Stirling & Associates, other alterations depicted on their plans include the like-for-like replacement of several windows along the north and west elevations, as well as the like-for-like replacement of a brick chimney along the west elevation (Andrew Stirling & Associates 1981).

29 Lansell Road saw several more changes in both ownership and physical fabric throughout the 21st century. These include an approval for a complete demolition in 2001 which was never executed, as well as the addition of a tennis court, freestanding single storey brick veneer garage and rumpus room at the rear left corner of the residence in 2002 (City of Stonnington Building Files 2001, 2002). The most substantial alterations took place in 2013, which include the extant two-storey brick rear extension along the western elevation. The building remains in use as a residence.

Comparative Analysis

While the English Domestic Revival style was a relatively widespread style in Toorak during the interwar period, 29 Lansell Road is particularly unique by virtue of its complex form that combines circular and rectilinear lines, and visually prominent chimneys. As a result, there are only a few comparative examples within the City of Stonnington.

Comparative examples include:

- **22 St Georges Road, Toorak (HO513).** A 1937 English Domestic Revival style house with a circular turret drawing on French Norman vernacular architecture and designed by Edward Billson. The buildings share a lot of similarities with respect to the combined geometric and circular built forms, slate tile roof, tall projecting face brick chimneys, and face brick walls. They are both considered to be good examples of the English Domestic Revival that also incorporate an unusual built form.
- **Normandie, 657 Toorak Road, Toorak (individually significant in HO180 Power Street Precinct).** Designed by Geoffrey Sommers and built in the 1930s, this French Provincial inspired English Domestic Revival style design compares well to 29 Lansell Road in terms of its unusual built form and slate roof. However, it is distinguished in terms of its distinct stone materiality and diamond pane windows. Further, it lacks the visually prominent face brick chimneys that define 29 Lansell Road. While it is more elaborate in terms of its detailing and striking use of stone, its complex geometric and curved form is of equal standard with 29 Lansell Road.
- **81 St Georges Road, Toorak (HO517).** Built in c.1934, 81 St Georges Road is an impressive two-storey English Domestic Revival house with a distinctive polygonal turret. The buildings share several similarities with respect to the unusual built form including turrets, face brick walls, and tall projecting face brick chimneys. They are both considered to be good examples of the English Domestic Revival that also incorporate an unusual built form.

As the above comparative analysis has demonstrated, 29 Lansell Road is a highly unique and visually distinct English Domestic Revival residence that compares well to the very few comparative examples within the municipality. As with the above examples, 29 Lansell Road is distinct from more typical English Domestic Revival buildings as a result of its distinctly unusual built and roof forms. This is reinforced by the use of rounded brick posts along the front boundary wall, a unique feature which differs from the fencing seen on other sites.

References

£300 Theft from Toorak Home. (1946, July 23). *The Argus*, 6.

29 Lansell Road Toorak Building Files. 2001. 29 Lansell Road Toorak. City of Stonnington Archives.

29 Lansell Road Toorak Building Files. 2002. 29 Lansell Road Toorak. City of Stonnington Archives.

29 Lansell Road Toorak Building Files. 2013. 29 Lansell Road Toorak. City of Stonnington Archives.

Advertising. (1953, July 21). *The Age*, 9.

Ancestry.com. Australia, Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.

Andrew Stirling & Associates. (1981, May). *Proposed Renovation to Existing Brick Residence at 29 Lansell Road* [building plan]. Stonnington City Council.

Context Pty Ltd. 2009. 'Stonnington Thematic Environmental History.' Unpublished report prepared for City of Stonnington. PDF file.

Foster, D. 1999. 'Melbourne's Most Fashionable Suburb: A History of Toorak, East of Kooyong Road 1840–1998.' Unpublished Masters diss., Monash University.

Foster, D. c.1996 to 2000. '12 Lansell Road.' Unpublished report prepared to the City of Stonnington. PDF file.

State Library of Victoria, Sands & McDougall Street Directories of Victoria, 1940-1974.

Stonnington City Council. 2012. Heritage Citation Report: Power Street Precinct, Power Street, Toorak, Hermes ID 31190. Unpublished report. PDF file.

Stonnington City Council. 2020. Heritage Citation Report: Residence, 81 St Georges Road, Toorak, Hermes ID 200330. Unpublished report. PDF file.

Stonnington City Council. 2020. Heritage Citation Report: Residence, 22 St Georges Road, Toorak, Hermes ID 197684. Unpublished report. PDF file.

Toorak the Beautiful. Then and Now. (1937, December 11). *The Argus*, 12-13.

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-east facing view of residence from Lansell Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



North-east facing view of residence and front landscaping from Lansell Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



North-west facing view from Lansell Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Freestanding rear addition as viewed from Lansell Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of the upper level double casement windows with timber louvred shutters (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of the tall face brick chimneys (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Overview in relation to streetscape, noting that the roof is the most visible element (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of the original front boundary wall (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).

Authors

Citation prepared by: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2022 (Vivian Lu and Reuel Balmadres).

Quality assurance review conducted by: Corinne Softley.