

Heritage Citation – Individual Place

Heritage Place: Shops

Address: 46-50 Wattletree Road, Armadale

HO Reference: HO754

Citation status: Final

Date Updated: 21 March 2022

Designer: Unknown

Year of Construction: c.1891-1895

Builder: Unknown



Photograph of 46-50 Wattletree Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Location map and extent of 46-50 Wattletree Road, Armadale.

Heritage Group: Retail and wholesale

Key Theme: Retailing and hospitality

Heritage Type: Shop

Key Sub-theme: Serving local communities

Significance Level: Local

Recommendation: Recommended for the Heritage Overlay as an individual place.

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| 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 46-50 Wattletree Road, Armadale, is significant. Specifically, the form, scale, setback, detailing and fenestration of the group of three double-storey late Victorian stores is of local significance. The landscaping, ground floor shop fronts, awning and other later alterations and additions to the property are not significant.

How is it significant?

46-50 Wattletree Road is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

46-50 Wattletree Road is historically significant in demonstrating the development of local shops and small businesses in late 19th century Armadale, specifically during the 1880s land boom when there was a shift from sparsely developed paddocks to an upper middle-class urban area. Situated within walking distance of local residents, buildings of this nature, in which shopkeepers lived above the shop, were primarily erected to serve the everyday needs of the local community following the emergence of scattered communities within the municipality. The group of buildings therefore forms a tangible link to this period of late 19th century development. (Criterion A)

46-50 Wattletree Road is aesthetically significant as a substantially intact and well-presented group of late Victorian shops, comprising a store on the ground floor and a residence on the first floor. Key attributes contributing towards its aesthetic significance include its symmetry, ornamented parapet with a central projecting pediment on each shop, original brick profiled chimneys, intact timber sash windows with expressed architraves and sidelights on the facade, timber sash windows on the eastern elevation, moulded ornamentation above the facade windows and along the string course, stucco render, and original residential entries at 46 and 48 Wattletree Road. (Criterion E)

HERCON Criteria Assessment

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| A | <i>Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history</i> | 46-50 Wattletree Road is historically significant in demonstrating the development of local shops and small businesses in late 19th century Armadale, specifically during the 1880s land boom when there was a shift from sparsely developed paddocks to an upper middle-class urban area. Situated within walking distance of local residents, buildings of this nature, in which shopkeepers lived above the shop, were primarily erected to serve the everyday needs of the local community following the emergence of scattered communities within the municipality. The group of buildings therefore forms a tangible link to this period of late 19th century development. |
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| <i>B</i> | <i>Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history</i> | The place does not meet this criterion. |
| <i>C</i> | <i>Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history</i> | The place does not meet this criterion. |
| <i>D</i> | <i>Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments</i> | The place does not meet this criterion. |
| <i>E</i> | <i>Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics</i> | 46-50 Wattletree Road is aesthetically significant as a substantially intact and well-presented group of late Victorian shops, comprising a store on the ground floor and a residence on the first floor. Key attributes contributing towards its aesthetic significance include its symmetry, ornamented parapet with a central projecting pediment on each shop, original brick profiled chimneys, intact timber sash windows with expressed architraves and sidelights on the facade, timber sash windows on the eastern elevation, moulded ornamentation above the façade windows and along the string course, stucco render, and original residential entries at 46 and 48 Wattletree Road. |
| <i>F</i> | <i>Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period</i> | The place does not meet this criterion. |
| <i>G</i> | <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> | The place does not meet this criterion. |
| <i>H</i> | <i>Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.</i> | The place does not meet this criterion. |

Description

- Physical Analysis

46-50 Wattletree Road, Armadale consists of a group of three double-storey shops built in a late Victorian style. As with other shops of this period and style, the structures consist of a commercial store on the ground level and a residence on the upper level. The brick structure is laid with a stretcher bond that is rendered and painted on the front façade, and partially rendered on the side elevations. The rear of the structure retains its open face brick, with the south facing upper walls finished with a concrete render. The structure has a triple hipped roof over the primary two-storey structure, extending to flat roof on the rear two-storey addition, followed by a single-storey skillion roof addition. The roofs are clad with corrugated sheet metal and obscured from view by the front and side parapets. Each shop features two original face brick corbelled chimneys on the hipped roof and a single face brick chimney on the flat roof.

The three shop fronts form a symmetrical façade. The ground level commercial premises are raised slightly above street level and comprises a shop window and central entrance door that sits parallel to the two front steps. 46 and 48 Wattletree Road include an original residential entrance to the right of the shopfront, including original joinery, while 50 Wattletree Road has not retained the residential entrance. The ground level walls to 48 and 50 Wattletree Road are finished with a square white tile, while 46 Wattletree Road has painted brick and timber panel. The shopfronts themselves all appear to be replacements. A single trim deck metal clad awning with supports extends over the shopfronts and footpath. A level course lies above the awning level.

Each upper level has a single timber sash window with sidelights. The windows have an expressed architrave with four dentils, characterised by a leaf shaped mould and a flat label mould above. The parapet includes an expressed level course with flanking precast console brackets and a highly detailed pre-cast bust. The parapets are capped with a projecting pediment on each shop. Notably, the parapet pediment of 48 Wattletree Road projects slightly higher than the two end pediments.

The south (rear) of the shops includes a single storey extension at each property. The fenestration on these extensions consist of single timber sash windows with a concrete sill.

The backyards of the shops consist of a long and narrow space demarcated by timber paling fences between the property boundary and each shop. These spaces are mainly used for ad hoc storage and are in overall poor condition, particularly around 50 Wattletree Road. There is a very large mature peppercorn tree (*Schinus molle*) in the backyard of 48 Wattletree Road.

46-50 Wattletree Road has side and rear lane access, characterised by preserved bluestone road paving and guttering. The building is currently used as a mixed commercial and residential building. While the façades are intact and well-preserved, the render on the front façade, as well as the side and rear elevations, are in poor condition in several area. Overall, the group of buildings would be in fair condition and have moderate integrity.

- Alterations and Additions

- Awning replaced.
- 46 Wattletree Road:
 - Commercial space altered and refurbished, including the shop front with timber paneling and a pair of timber doors.
- 48 Wattletree Road:
 - Commercial space altered and refurbished, including the shop front with new glazing and joinery.
 - Services added to the awning.
 - Conduits added to the upper level façade.
- 50 Wattletree Road:
 - Commercial space altered and refurbished, including the shop front with new glazing and joinery. Removal of the original residential entrance.
 - Services added to the roof and awning.
 - Two-storey advertising sign affixed to the eastern side of the building.

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

The Surveyor General's 1857 plan of Melbourne and its suburbs depicts Wattletree Road and Dandenong Road as established, forming the triangular block on which the subject properties would later come to be situated (Kearney 1855). The subject lots are depicted on this plan as undeveloped however there are some scattered structures in the vicinity. The land on which the subject properties are situated comprised Portion 200b and was purchased along with Portion 200a by William Chandler in April 1871 (Hutchinson 1874). The area of land remained largely vacant after this point in time, however, with Portion 200 was marked as being a 'reserve for cattle yards' (Hutchinson 1874).

Residential and commercial development in this area rapidly exploded during the 1880s land boom, which saw a period of unprecedented prosperity, growth and development. Urban boundaries were pushed out as people, sharing in the ideals of home ownership, sought out new residential land to build their homes (Context Pty Ltd 2009, 41). This created a climate in which land was purchased, subdivided and re-sold by settlers and speculators (Context Pty Ltd 2009, 37). The triangular lot bounded by present day Wattletree Road, Kooyong Road and Princess Highway was subdivided into twenty-five building allotments in 1885, paving way for the construction of 46-50 Wattletree Road (Muntz & Bage 1885).

The shops were erected in c.1891-1895 and are depicted in a 1902 MMBW plan as three semi-detached buildings. At the time they were listed as 22-24 Wattletree Road, with asphalted rears and troughs at the south end of the property (MMBW 1902). Known occupants during this initial period include bootmaker Albert Sprague at 20 Wattletree Road and fruiter Charles Dorrington at 22 Wattletree Road (Sands & McDougall 1895). While Albert Sprague continued to occupy 20 Wattletree Road by 1900, 24 Wattletree Road was occupied by butcher A. Tivendale by this time and 22 Wattletree Road was occupied by fruiter and greengrocer Thomas Duncum (Sands & McDougall 1900). Located within walking distance of the surrounding residential buildings, these shops served the everyday needs of local community.

The 1902 MMBW plan shows the subject properties as being surrounded on all sides by residential properties. Notably they are depicted as the only commercial structures on the triangular portion of land between Wattletree Road and Dandenong Road. This pattern of development remained in place until the post-war years, when a number of residential properties were evidently demolished and the lots subdivided to create smaller residential and commercial properties. Today, the properties remain in use as commercial tenancies.

Comparative Analysis

Erected in a late Victorian design with a store on the ground floor and a residence on the upper floor, the shops at 46-50 Wattletree Road are typical terrace shops that were erected during the late 19th century period, whereby shopkeepers either lived above the shop or simply set up shop in the front room of their house (Context 2009, 107). Constructed to provide for the municipality's rapidly expanding population during the 1880s land boom, the development of these shops forms part of the broader story of transformation from a formerly sparse area into an upper middle-class area.

Comparative examples include:

- **Shops, 1098-1102 High Street, Armadale (individually significant in HO400 High Street Rail and Retail Precinct).** The shops at 1098-1102 High Street, Armadale are directly comparable to the three

shops at 46–50 Wattletree Road as examples of late Victorian mixed commercial and residential properties. Key comparative attributes include the use of symmetry, ornamented parapets, decorative mouldings and expressed architraves. Aesthetically, the shops on High Street are more architecturally expressive than 46–50 Wattletree Road, and their condition is better. However, their integrity is equal to 46–50 Wattletree Road.

- **Former shop/dairy, 44 Union Street, Armadale (individually significant in HO377 Union Street Precinct).** This standalone former shop/dairy is comparable to the three buildings at 46–50 Wattletree Road as an example of a late Victorian terrace store with a second storey private residence. Both sites feature a rendered wall finish, symmetry in design, a tall decorative parapet and decorative window hood moulds. Unlike 46–50 Wattletree Road, the structure incorporates a series of arch details through the windows and porch. It is also in better condition. However, it lacks the level of decorative ornamentation observed at 46–50 Wattletree Road.
- **Shop, 1010 High Street, Armadale (individually significant in HO400 High Street Rail and Retail Precinct).** This shop is comparable to the three buildings at 46–50 Wattletree Road as an example of a late Victorian terrace store with a second-storey private residence. Key comparable features include the decorative parapet with a central pediment, moulded string course, modified ground floor shops and a lack of an original awning. The shop at 1010 High Street, however, is of a higher integrity regardless of the dark paint scheme.

The above comparative analysis demonstrates that while the physical condition of 46-50 Wattletree Road is poorer when compared to other similar examples, it compares well in terms of its aesthetic values and level of integrity. This is particularly due to its intact ornamented parapet with decorative moulded detailing, original windows with expressed architraves, and decorative mouldings.

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



Overview of the three buildings from Wattletree Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



View of upper floor façade from Wattletree Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



South-west facing oblique view from Wattletree Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of upper floor fenestration and detailing to 48 and 50 Wattletree Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of 50 Wattletree Road parapet (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of 48 Wattletree Road parapet (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail view of 46 Wattletree Road parapet (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



North-west oblique view from adjacent bluestone laneway (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Mature peppercorn tree (*Schinus molle*) at the rear of the property (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



South-west view of mature peppercorn tree (*Schinus molle*) from the adjacent bluestone laneway (source: Google Streetview, 2019).

Authors

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