

## Heritage Citation – Individual Place

**Heritage Place:** Avington  
**Address:** 3 Illawarra Crescent, Toorak

**HO Reference:** HO62  
**Citation status:** Final  
**Date Updated:** 8 March 2022  
**Year of Construction:** 1926

**Designer:** Robert Bell Hamilton  
**Builder:** Unknown



Photograph of Avington (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Location map and extent of HO62.

**Heritage Group:** Residential buildings  
**Heritage Type:** Residence

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

**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 3 Illawarra Crescent, Toorak (otherwise known as Avington) is significant. The form, scale and detailing of the substantial Old English Revival residence with distinct Arts and Crafts influences is of local significance, along with the original garage, boundary wall and lychgate. The landscaping, swimming pool, gym and other later alterations and additions to the property are not significant.

### *How is it significant?*

Avington is of local aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington, and is associated with the well-reputed Australian architect, Robert Bell Hamilton.

### *Why is it significant?*

Avington is aesthetically significant as an intact and finely detailed Old English Revival residence with distinct Arts and Crafts influences. Elements of aesthetic interest include the use of terracotta shingle style tiles to the roof, timber shingle wall cladding, the use of clinker brick, the use of leadlight and textured glass windows and decorative chimneys. Other key character elements of the site include the original garage and the original boundary wall with a lychgate. (Criterion E)

Avington has associative significance as a residence designed by the well-reputed Australian architect Robert Bell Hamilton. (Criterion H)

## 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>	Avington is aesthetically significant as an intact and finely detailed Old English Revival residence with distinct Arts and Crafts influences. Elements of aesthetic interest include the use of terracotta shingle style tiles to the roof, timber shingle wall cladding, the use of clinker brick, the use of leadlight and textured glass windows and decorative chimneys. Other key character elements of

		the site include the original garage and the original boundary wall with a lychgate.
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>	Avington has associative significance as a house designed by the well-reputed Australian architect Robert Bell Hamilton.

## Description

### • Physical Analysis

Avington is a large two-storey residence built in an Old English Domestic Revival style with distinct Arts and Crafts influences. The structure at ground level consists of face polychrome brick laid in a running bond. The first level consists of half-timbered walls with vertical and diagonal bracing painted black. The structure has a main gable roof. The roof has two projecting open gables on the north elevation, two gables on the east elevation and one gable each on the south and west elevations. The roof is clad in flat terracotta tiles. There are two face brick chimneys extending from the roof, located in the north and south sides. The chimneys have a wide base before tapering into a narrower corbelled chimney with three terracotta chimney pots.

The front façade presents as a triple fronted elevation. The largest gable which is part of the main roof is clad in timber shingles and has a large centred rectangular timber louvred vent. The upper-level projects further outwards in a smaller gable bay creating an overhang over the ground level window below it. The projecting gable bay is supported by two brackets and is similarly detailed with the shingle clad and louvred vent. The gable bay and ground level below feature a bank of three white timber framed double hung sash windows. The gable and windows are framed by timber bracing. The bracing features detailed checkered and herringbone nogging located under the windows. The right side of the ground level projects outwards in a polygonal bay forming a distinct polygonal roof. Each side of the bay features a large centred square white timber double hung sash window with black timber outer frame. The windows on the northern elevation consist of diamond pattern leadlight glass. The left side of the northern elevation includes the western elevation upper floor gable extension. The gable projects further than the north gable and is supported by two square brick pillars. The gable is clad in white sheeting with black timber bracing, contrasting the mainly brown brick and timber shingle clad structure.

The main feature on the west elevation is the projecting half timbered gable supported by square brick pillars. The high-pitched roof projects over the gable. The gable features full length windows covering

the entire length of the gable. The windows consist of twelve pane timber framed windows. To the left of the upper-level gable, the bracing features a basketweave and herringbone nogging. The windows on the ground level have been replaced.

The east elevation includes imitation half timber gable detailing with timber bracing affixed to the brickwork. The projecting upper-level gable projects as a pitched roof forming a sheltered carport at the ground level. The carport is supported by brick piers and heavily curved timber brackets. The main entrance is raised in a recessed porch. There is a bay window on the ground level with a black timber frame, brackets and diamond pattern leadlight glass. There is a garage located at the rear of the east elevation. The structure's south elevation is located on the property boundary.

Located at the end of Illawarra Court, Avington has a short street front boundary wall. The tall polychrome brick wall is like the brickwork of the main structure. The wall has a two-course stretcher laid cap and piers with precast concrete ball mouldings. The main entrance is flanked by two tall and wide square brick piers capped with a pitched roof clad in a similar flat terracotta tile as the main house. The roof gutter, fascia and timber brackets are painted black. A decorative curved wrought iron fence sits between the piers and roof.

The main entrance driveway is red brick laid in a herringbone pattern. The driveway is flanked by a low boxwood (*buxus*) hedge. The grounds of Avington are landscaped with mature trees and topiary boxwoods (*buxus*) located along the street front portion of the property. There is a small lawn located in front of the north elevation which leads to the lap pool along the east boundary wall. The lap pool area is sunk with a brick retaining wall between it and the house. The east boundary wall directly beside the pool consists of a tall masonry wall and hedge wall. There is a south courtyard beside the boundary wall paved in stone tiles and featuring an outdoor brick fireplace built into the boundary wall.

Avington is located at the end of Illawarra Court on a cul-de-sac. Illawarra Crescent terminates a short distance away at St Georges Road. It is located close to Heyington Station. Avington remains in use as a residential property and is considered to be in good condition. While the grounds have been modified and would be considered to have moderate integrity, the dwelling has high integrity overall with the exception of the former addition and a later rear addition.

- [Alterations and Additions](#)

- Repainting.
- Flat dormer roof added to the east elevation (after February 2017).
- Flat roof extension to the south side of the main property (after February 2017).
- Swimming pool added.
- Timber pergola added to the east courtyard beside the swimming pool.
- South wing of the main structure reroofed in corrugated galvanised iron sheeting (after February 2017).

## 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

Avington at 3 Illawarra Crescent was erected in 1926 for engineer Francis M. Burnside. It was first identified as an eleven room brick house named Avington in 1928 (Prahan Rate Book 1928-29). While studies have attributed the dwelling's design to Walter and Richard Butler, an earlier citation indicates that the original 1926 architectural plan was in fact prepared by Robert Bell Hamilton (Nigel Lewis and Associates 1992).

An Australian architect and Member of the Legislative Assembly for Toorak for the Liberal Country Party, Hamilton was particular noted for his Old English style designs and Arts and Crafts emphasis on the designs of fittings (The Age 1947, 18; Fenwick n.d.; Goad and Willis ed. 2012, 314). He partnered with F. L. Klingender from 1921-1925, previously of architectural firm Klingender & Aslop, and then with Marcus Norris in the 1930s. Hamilton worked across residences, flats and commercial buildings, and his most prominent works include Tudor Revival flats at Moore Abbey in Marne Street, South Yarra (1924) and Denby Dale in Glenferrie Road, Kooyong (1938) (Goad and Willis ed. 2012, 314).

Listed as the owner and occupier from 1927 until at least 1974, Irish born Francis Massey Burnside resided at Avington with his wife Ila Leland Burnside following their marriage in 1925 (née Greene) (Sands & McDougall 1925-1974; The Herald 1934, 16; Geelong Advertiser 1925, 3). According to historical material, Avington appears to have been named after Ila Green's original family residence in Camperdown (Geelong Advertiser 1925, 3). Documented social events during the Burnside occupancy include a farewell party for Ila Leland's parents in 1935 (The Herald 1935, 17). A description of the party

indicates that the house contained a reception room and landscaped outdoor area for entertaining (The Herald 1935, 17). Although not much is known of the Burnsides in terms of occupations and children, their remarkable five decade residency at Avington is certainly worth noting. Given their long occupancy at the house, it is postulated that they resided at Avington until their deaths.

Property records indicate that Alphington was put up for sale several times throughout the 21st century- twice in the early 2000s, and then again in 2016. These ownership transfers have ultimately resulted in several contemporary alterations and extensions. It was last sold in 2020 and is currently being used as a private family residence.

### Comparative Analysis

Avington was designed by renowned architect Robert Bell Hamilton. Hamilton's work in Stonnington is vast and well represented with multiple properties covered by the Heritage Overlay. Each property abides by Old English Revival design characteristic that is recognisable across the whole municipality.

Comparable examples include:

- **Taunton (520 Toorak Road, Toorak) (HO452).** Taunton is a collection of duplex flats constructed in 1936 to the designs of Robert Bell Hamilton. Though it is multi-unit living as opposed to a single household, both properties share the same design characteristics. These include the built form, roof pitch and terracotta shingled material, timber shingles for wall cladding, the use of clinker brick, timber bracing, sash windows and, most interestingly, the use of a lychgate. Through many of his designs, Hamilton paid specific attention to the front wall and gateway. In some examples, he has opted for the use of a lychgate, as is represented at both Taunton and Avington.
- **Burnham (14 Grange Road, Toorak) (HO438).** Burnham was constructed in 1932-33 to the designs of Hamilton. The structure, similar to Taunton, comprises a block of flats with associated garages and an original and intact brick boundary wall. Hamilton is described in the citation for Burnham as 'one of the most important and influential designers of Luxury flats in Toorak and South Yarra and this development of four large single-level flats, together with 'Haddon Hall', which is of a similar design, although comprising maisonettes, demonstrate the two approaches used by Hamilton over the next decade either in separate buildings or in combination' (Chapman, 2016). Similar design characteristics include the built form, roof pitch, shingles, the use of clinker brick, timber bracing and sash windows.
- **Telgai House (4 Struan Street, Toorak) (HO168).** Telgai House was constructed in 1923 to Hamilton's designs as his own private home. Telgai House observes many of the same characteristics attributable to Hamilton's design, including the use of clinker brick, timber bracing, gabled roof form with terracotta tiling, sash windows, roughly hewn timber pillars and the entrance treatment. Telgai House is however one of the few examples of Hamilton's works that does not have a clinker brick boundary wall.



## 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 (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Boundary wall and façade as viewed from Illawarra Crescent (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



The lychgate (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Gable details on the front façade (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Gable and window details on the front façade (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).

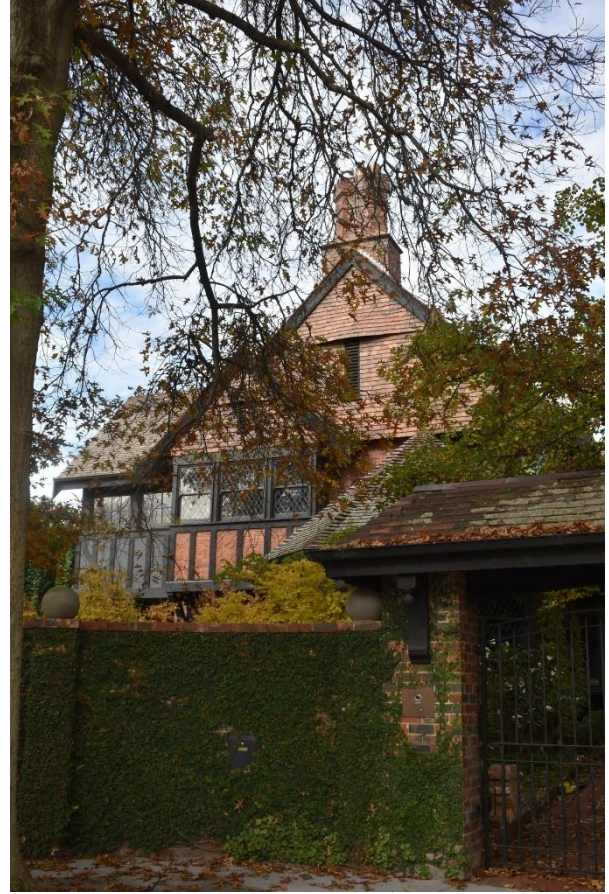


Conical roof form on the façade (source: Extent Heritage, 2021).





Southern elevation and driveway from lychgate  
(source: Extent Heritage, 2021).



Façade as viewed from Illawarra Crescent  
(source: Extent Heritage, 2021).

## Authors

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