

Heritage Citation – Individual Place

Heritage Place: Residence
Address: 7 Glenbervie Road, Toorak

HO Reference: HO311
Citation status: Final
Date Updated: 17 March 2022
Year of Construction: 1933-34

Designer: Marcus Barlow
Builder: Unknown



Photograph of 7 Glenbervie Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Location map and extent of HO311.

Heritage Group: Residential buildings
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: 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 7 Glenbervie Road, Toorak is significant. Specifically, the form, scale and detailing of the substantial 1933-34 Interwar Georgian Revival residence is of local significance, as well as the original loop driveway and low boundary wall. Later alterations and additions to the property are not significant.

How is it significant?

7 Glenbervie Road, Toorak of local aesthetic and representative significance to the City of Stonington, and is associated with well-known architect Marcus Barlow.

Why is it significant?

7 Glenbervie Road has representative value as a highly intact and distinct example of the Interwar Georgian Revival style. This is demonstrated most prominently by its mostly symmetrical façade and built form, circular portico with balcony above, Corinthian columns, face brick chimneys, timber shutters, rich use of materials and formal site layout. (Criterion D)

7 Glenbervie Road is aesthetically significant as a visually distinct example of an Interwar Georgian Revival residence that makes a clear contrast with the contemporary version of the Georgian Revival mansion in the area. It has a strong sense of character owing to the mostly symmetrical façade and built form, porticos, columns, rich use of materials, low boundary wall and the formal layout of the semi-circular driveway which establishes a grand entry for the building. (Criterion E)

7 Glenbervie Road, Toorak has associative significance as a house designed by well-known architect Marcus Barlow. (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>	7 Glenbervie Road has representative value as a highly intact and distinct example of the Interwar Georgian Revival style. This is demonstrated most prominently by its mostly symmetrical façade and built form, circular portico with balcony above, Corinthian columns, face brick chimneys, timber shutters, rich use of materials and formal site layout.

E	<i>Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics</i>	7 Glenbervie Road is aesthetically significant as a visually distinct example of an Interwar Georgian Revival residence that makes a clear contrast with the contemporary version of the Georgian Revival mansion in the area. It has a strong sense of character owing to the mostly symmetrical façade and built form, porticos, columns, rich use of materials, low boundary wall and the formal layout of the semi-circular driveway which establishes a grand entry for the building.
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>	7 Glenbervie Road, Toorak has associative significance as a house designed by well-known architect Marcus Barlow.

Description

• Physical Analysis

7 Glenbervie Road is a two-storey residence built in the Interwar Georgian Revival style. The structure consists of polychrome face red clinker brick laid in a running bond. The main open gable structure has a projecting gablet on the east and west elevations. Additionally, there is a smaller original wing facing west extending from the southwest corner of the dwelling. The roof is clad in terracotta tiles. There are five chimneys of various heights extending from the roof of the main structure. The chimneys are face brick and detailed with expressed corner strapwork and corbelling.

The front façade presents mainly as symmetrically, except for the ground level fenestration. The break fronted entrance is centered and sheltered under a semi-circular portico supported by six stylised narrow circular Corinthian columns. The portico is painted white. The single leaf main entrance is flanked by two sidelights with a white timber frame and semi-circular glass design and a fanlight with a stylised rising sun motif. The portico forms a small balcony with a wrought iron balustrade accessible via French doors and timber shutters painted white. The centered section is capped by the projecting roof gablet. The triangular form of the gablet is framed by the expressed eaves. The gable features an oval shaped bullseye window. The window is framed by a shaped masonry sill with white brick keystones and a white wrought iron grill.

The ground level features a projecting angled bay with a convex sheet metal roof to the south of the entrance portico. To the other side of the portico is a double hung timber sash window framed by a large, bricked arch with a white keystone. The interior of the arch is finished in a white stucco. The base of the window includes a black wrought iron detailed frame. The upper level features two sets of paired double hung sash windows with a white concrete sill and flanking white timber louvred shutters. The top of the windows is capped by a flat gauged arch. The flat gauged arches and façade brickwork terminates under a wide stucco rendered cornice. The cornice is halved by a single string course and interspaced wall vents. The wide cornice ends under the projecting boxed eaves and gutters.

The west elevation opens onto the backyard area and is similarly detailed to the front façade. The projecting gable houses the main French doors to the paved backyard area. The French doors are located on a smaller projection capped by a convex sheet metal roof. The projecting west wing also features full length white timber French doors on the ground level and shuttered windows on the upper level. The upper level includes a long open balcony running the length of the wing facing north.

The northern elevation of the residence features a prominent semi-circular portico with a similar design and detailed finish as the front façade portico. Unlike the front façade, the north portico is raised and accessible via a sweeping set of steps expressing the circular form of the portico.

There is a single storey garage extension, parallel and connected to the west projecting wing (the original garage, as evident on the original drawings). The garage extension features a similar brickwork, gable roof and a white counterweight garage door. While it is not original, it is sympathetic to the main structure.

The grounds of 7 Glenbervie Road are landscaped. The street front boundary is demarcated by a low masonry wall with end cavetto curves. The wall is covered in creeping fig vines (*fiscus pumilia*) and is backed by a tall hedge. The driveway forms a large semi-circle with a separate street entrance and exit; this is an original feature of the site as demonstrated by the original drawings. The driveway is open to the street and laid in patterned brickwork following the sweeping form of the driveway. The south end of the driveway extends and terminates at the garage. The driveway takes up most of the front area of the property but is edged with wide leveled garden beds that follow the alignment of the driveway. The north side of the property and driveway includes a tall masonry wall. The wall starts at the northeast corner of the property and follows the curve of the driveway inwards meeting the main house, effectively closing off the backyard area. The wall features cavetto curves along its length and interspaced wide piers. The wall and piers are capped in an expressed natural concrete cap.

The property has an extensive backyard with paved areas off the north and west elevations of the main structure. There are mature trees located on the property directly to the north and south of the main structure. Immediately off the west elevation is a small lawn next to the paved area which also features a small swimming pool. The half side of the backyard closer to the house is demarcated from the rest of the backyard by a low masonry wall. The wall breaks at a timber pergola that leads to a tennis court occupying the remainder of the backyard.

7 Glenbervie Road is located close to the intersection of Toorak and Glenferrie Roads. The property is currently used as a private residence. The property is in good condition. The landscape has been altered with the addition of a tennis court and swimming pool. Aside from the garage, which is considered to be sympathetic, the main structure appears intact and therefore has high integrity.

- ## Alterations and Additions

- Swimming pool added.
- Tennis court added.
- Front garden beds relandscaped (2009).
- Mature tree in the street front side garden bed removed (2009).
- Garage extension to the south of the main structure.
- Skylight added to the roof of the west wing extension.

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

7 Glenbervie Road was erected in 1933-34 for Oswald D. Benjamin. Although a previous citation attributes the design to architect Marcus Martin, a review of original architectural drawings reveals that the architect responsible was in fact Marcus Barlow. A renowned Melbourne architect during the interwar period, Barlow worked across domestic and commercial architecture, and was a strong advocate for modern United States architecture and urbanism (Goad and Willis ed. 2011). He is best known for designing several notable city buildings in Melbourne. These include the Manchester Unity Building at 91 Swanston Street (1929-32), Temple Court at 422-428 Collins Street (1925), and Century Building at 125 Swanston Street (1938-40).

Original architectural drawings of the residence show a two-storey red brick house in the Interwar Georgian Revival style. The ground floor comprises a lounge, kitchen, dining room, nursery, smoke room, hall, as well as a laundry, fuel store, tool store and garage extending from the kitchen at the rear

of the property (Barlow 1933). The layout of the first floor is arranged in a similar fashion, and consists of a main bedroom with an adjoining dressing room and en suite, two smaller bedrooms, a sleep out, upper hall, secondary bathroom, two maids rooms and a maids bathroom (Barlow 1933).

Records indicate that Oswald D. Benjamin occupied the residence with his wife Bertha Martha (née Block) until his death in 1944 (Sands & McDougall 1935-1945; The Argus 1944, 4). Oswald was a WWI veteran and the former managing director of insurance company Bennie S. Cohen and Son (Vic) Pty Ltd, while Bertha Martha was the president of the Jewish Women's Guild and had an active role in welfare work (The Argus 1944, 4). Documented events at the dwelling during the Benjamin occupancy include a minor burglary in 1934, a W.I.Z.O. Culture Group meeting to discuss the play 'A Man's House' in 1937, and a luncheon for Derek Pearse of Adelaide in 1941 (The Herald 1934, 6; The Australian Jewish Herald 1937, 9; The Age 1941, 3). Bertha ultimately passed away a few months after Oswald, and ownership of the property was subsequently transferred to their son Bruce S. Benjamin (Sands & MacDougall 1944).

Bruce Benjamin retained ownership of the house until at least 1950, before it was subsequently purchased by Cedric M. Paynter in c. 1955 (Sands & McDougall 1955). A businessman, Paynter was the managing director of tobacco manufacturer Godfrey Phillips (Aust) Pty Ltd, and was subsequently appointed to the board of directors of Godfrey Phillips Ltd London in 1950 (The Argus 1950, 9). It is unknown as to precisely how long Paynter inhabited the dwelling, yet records indicate that D. B. Leahey occupied the house from at least 1970 (Sands & McDougall 1970-74). The dwelling was put up for auction again in the mid 1990s, and was last sold in 2002.

Comparative Analysis

Better known for his city buildings, the Georgian Revival style of 7 Glenbervie Road differs from the majority of Marcus Barlow's interwar designs. His domestic architecture was not limited to a particular design aesthetic, and thus ranged from Spanish Mission to Interwar Old English (see 20 Monkstadt Avenue, Ripponlea and 27, 29 and 31 Hotham Street, St Kilda). There are no comparable examples of his work that have been afforded heritage protection. As a result, the follow comparative analysis draws from similar Interwar Georgian Revival style houses in the municipality.

Comparative examples include:

- **1 Towers Road, Toorak (HO520).** Erected in 1937 to designs prepared by architect Bernard Sutton, this Interwar Georgian Revival style house is directly comparable to 7 Glenbervie Road in terms of style, form and detailing. It is highly intact and demonstrates all the elements emblematic of the Georgian Revival style, such as a hipped slate roof, rendered dressings and a symmetrical façade. Other analogous features include the multiplane windows with shutters, entrance portico and the ornamental central triangular pediment that sits above it. Both buildings share the same material palette. Compared to 7 Glenbervie Road, it is a grander iteration of the Georgian mansion, owing to its scale, formality, elegant tripartite window, and strong horizontal emphasis. **35-39 Albany Road, Toorak (HO488).** Designed by architect Geoffrey Sommers in 1940, this residence at 35-39 Albany Road is notable for its grand scale and setting. While typical Georgian Revival style elements are evident in its rigid symmetry, gabled slate roof and central entry bay, the house is distinct from similar style dwellings in its application of classical ornament. The dwelling is also setback from the generous front garden and curved gravel driveway, and thus maintains a greater sense of formality than 7 Glenbervie Road. Both buildings share the same material palette.

- **2 Yar Orrong Road, Toorak (H0522).** Designed by architects Hughes and Orme in 1940, this dwelling is characteristic of the Georgian Revival idiom in its carefully balanced façade and regularly spaced multi-pane timber framed windows with timber shutters. However, it deviates from the Georgian Revival style in its picturesque multi-hipped roof form and projecting bays, and is thus demonstrative of the varied aesthetic expressions during the interwar period. Compared to 7 Glenbervie Road, it is a less discernible example of the Georgian Revival style.

Overall, 7 Glenbervie Road is a highly intact and distinct example of the Interwar Georgian Revival style in its layout and sitting. It has a strong sense of character and is distinguished from some similar examples in its imposing use of circular porticos and Corinthian columns, as well as in its rich use of materials.

References

Barlow, Marcus R. (1933, July). *Residence 7 Glenbervie Road Toorak for Oswald Benjamin Esq* [architectural plan]. Stonnington History Centre Collection.

CAT BURGLAR LEAPS 20 FEET TO FLEE. (1934, October 2). *The Herald*, 6.

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

Culture Group. (1937, December 2). *The Australian Jewish Herald*, 9.

DIRECTOR OF TOBACCO CO. (1950, June 16). *The Argus*, 9.

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

Goad, P., Willis, J. 2012. *The Encyclopedia of Australian architecture*. Cambridge University Press: Port Melbourne.

Luncheon Party for Adelaide Visitor. (1941, January 10). *The Age*, 3.

MRS BERTHA BENJAMIN. (1944, November 20). *The Argus*, 4.

Nigel Lewis and Richard Aitken Pty Ltd. 1992. 'City of Malvern Heritage Study'.', Unpublished report prepared for City of Malvern.

State Library of Victoria, Sands & McDougall Street Directories of Victoria, 1935-1974 ed.

Stonnington City Council. 2008. Heritage Citation Report: Residence, 2 Yar Orrong Road Toorak, Stonnington City, Hermes ID 200326. Unpublished report. PDF file.

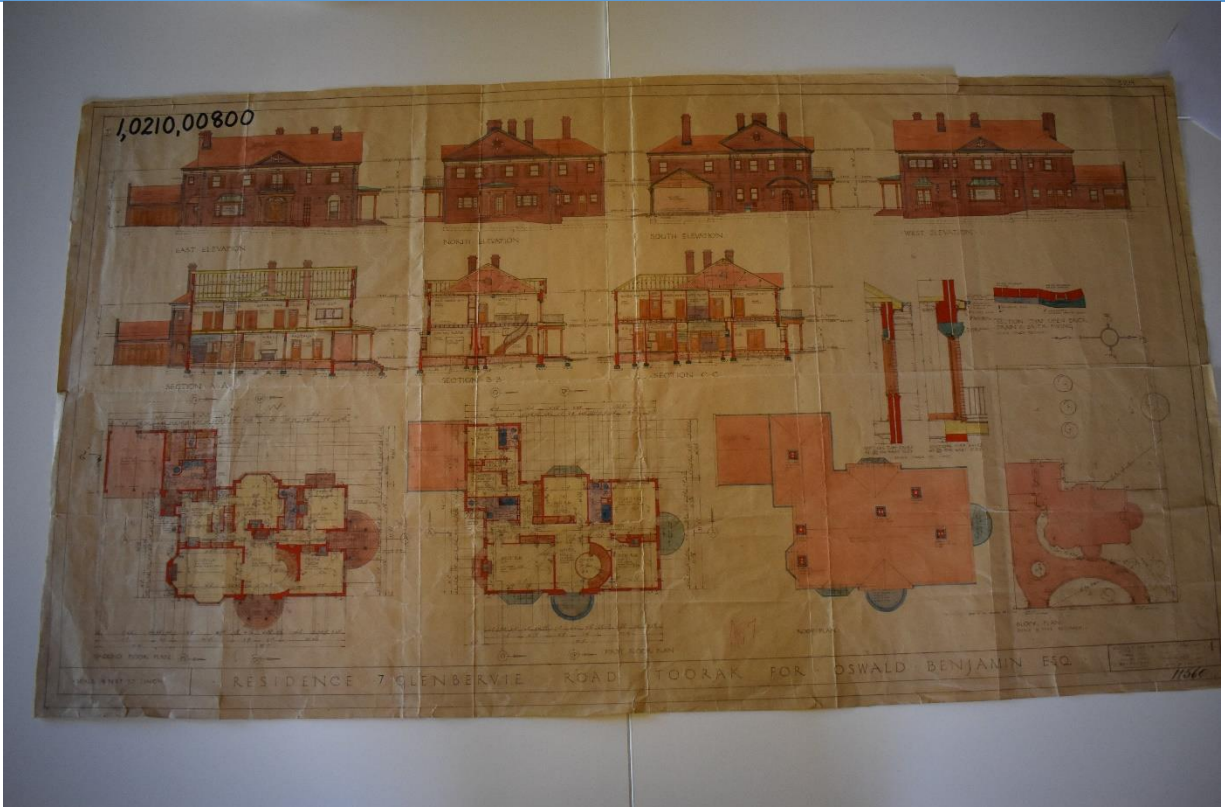
Stonnington City Council. 2015. Heritage Citation Report: Residence, 35-39 Albany Road Toorak, Stonnington City, Hermes ID 197640. Unpublished report. PDF file.

Stonnington City Council. 2017. Hermes Citation Report: Residence, 1 Towers Road Toorak, Stonnington City, Hermes ID 200327. Unpublished report. PDF file.

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



Original drawing (source: Barlow, Marcus R. (1933, July). *Residence 7 Glenbervie Road Toorak for Oswald Benjamin Esq* [architectural plan]. Stonnington History Centre Collection).



Detail of front portico (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail of chimneys (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Garage to the side of the dwelling (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Detail of gable end with oval shaped bullseye window (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).

Authors

Former citation prepared by: Nigel Lewis and Richard Aitken Pty Ltd, 1992.

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