City of
STONNINGTON

Norman Avenue Precinct

Prepared by: GJM Heritage (March 2025)

Address: Norman Avenue, South Yarra

Name:	Norman Avenue Precinct	**Review Date:**	June 2024
Place Type:	Residential Precinct	**Architect/Designer:**	Not known
Grading:	See grading table	**Builder:**	Not known
Extent of the Overlay:	See Figure 5	**Construction Date(s):**	c1900



Figure 1. 5 Norman Avenue, South Yarra



Figure 2. 6 Norman Avenue, South Yarra



Figure 3. 7 Norman Avenue, South Yarra



Figure 4. 8 Norman Avenue, South Yarra



Figure 5. Norman Avenue Precinct, South Yarra (GJM Heritage, July 2024)

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Norman Avenue Precinct, South Yarra, a late-Victorian residential subdivision containing a collection of houses dating to c1900.

The precinct includes:

- Norman Avenue (nos. 1-10 & 12)

Elements which contribute to the significance of the precinct include:

- Consistent single-storey houses of the Late Victorian period which also display some characteristics of the early Federation period
- Bichromatic brick construction (some overpainted)
- Slate-clad hipped roofs with bracketed eaves
- Predominantly asymmetrical principal elevations with projecting gable-ended bays
- Decoration to gable-ends including circular or diamond-shaped shaped vents, timber strapwork and a rough cement render finish
- Corrugated sheet metal-roofed front verandahs across part of the principal elevations
- Variety of cast-iron and timber decoration and posts to verandahs
- Variety of timber-framed window forms including tall rectangular, segmental arch-headed and arch-headed windows
- Bichromatic brick chimneys with corbelled capping
- The cul de sac form of Norman Avenue and allotment pattern resulting from the original subdivision of the Bonnington mansion estate.

Later front fences, vehicle accommodation and rear additions do not contribute to the significance of the precinct.

How is it significant?

The Norman Avenue Precinct, South Yarra, is of local historical, representative (architectural) and aesthetic significance.

Why is it significant?

The Norman Avenue Precinct has strong associations with the development of the municipality in the first part of the twentieth century when Victorian-era mansion estates began to be subdivided and developed following the economic depression of the 1890s. Constructed as part of the subdivision of the Bonnington mansion estate, the Norman Avenue Precinct clearly illustrates this important phase of development in the City of Stonnington (Criterion A).

The Norman Avenue Precinct is a cohesive collection of fine and substantially intact representative examples of Late Victorian houses with some early Federation detailing. The majority of houses in the precinct display typical features of this period, including bichromatic brick construction, asymmetrical forms, hipped roofs clad in slate, front verandahs with cast-iron or timber decoration and posts, gable-ends with decorative vents, timber strapwork and roughcast render finish and prominent corbelled bichromatic brick chimneys (Criterion D).

The Norman Avenue Precinct forms a highly unified group of residences dating to the early 1900s and constructed in a predominantly Late Victorian-style with some detailing from the early Federation period. The highly consistent materials, setbacks and detailing of the buildings – in conjunction with the garden settings – creates a picturesque and cohesive streetscape. The precinct demonstrates a high degree of consistency in scale, materiality and detailing and has a distinctive architectural character (Criterion E).

Historical Context

This place is associated with the following historic theme(s) taken from the *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History* (2009):

8 Building suburbs

- 8.1.3 The end of an era – mansion estate subdivisions in the twentieth century
- 8.2.1 Mansion Estates and the higher ground – middle-class estates in Prahran

Place History

The following history is drawn from the City of Stonnington Heritage Overlay Gap Study, prepared by Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd in 2009, with additional information as cited.

Norman Avenue comprises parts of Lot 33 and 34 in the Parish of Prahran, which were offered for sale at the Crown Land sales auctions in June 1849 (Figure 6).

Lot 33 was purchased by RA Balbirnie, a wealthy Scottish gentleman, who subdivided much of Lot 33 for resale as ‘portions suitable for orchards, vineyards and market gardens’ in 1851. *Hawksburn House* was constructed on a substantial allotment encompassing most of the northern section of Lot 33 in the 1850s. The house was accessed by way of a long driveway through formal gardens to Williams Road or a longer track to Gardiners Creek (later Toorak) Road via a bridge over the creek. This longer track would be formalised as Hawksburn Road in the 1880s.

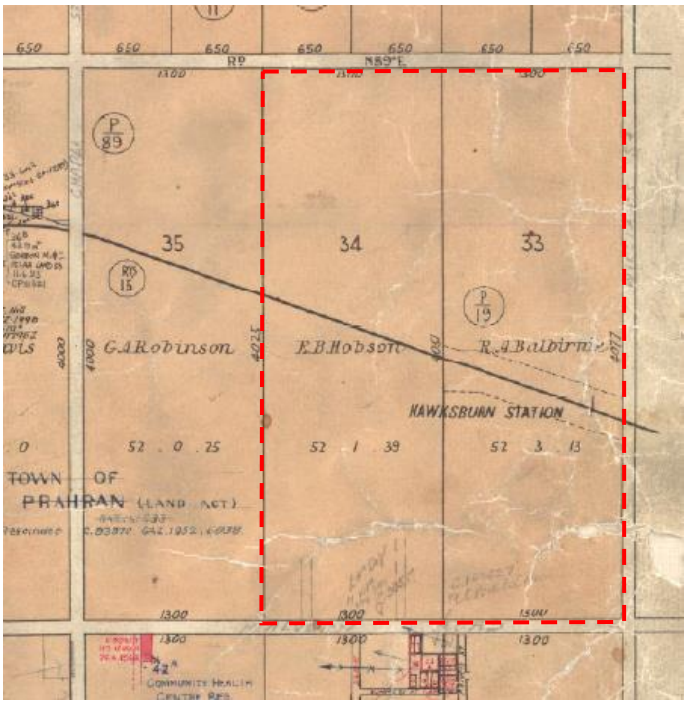


Figure 6. Detail of parish plan, showing lots 33 and 34 outlined in red; plan dates to c1880 (Source: Public Record Office Victoria)

Lot 34 was purchased by the Estate of the late Dr E B Hobson. The lot was beset with drainage problems and attracted the lowest prices. By the early 1850s, a substantial dwelling, *Bonnington*, had been constructed at the north-east corner of Lot 34 for James Moore. Kearney's map of Melbourne and suburbs, dating to 1855, shows both *Hawksburn House* and *Bonnington* (Figure 7).

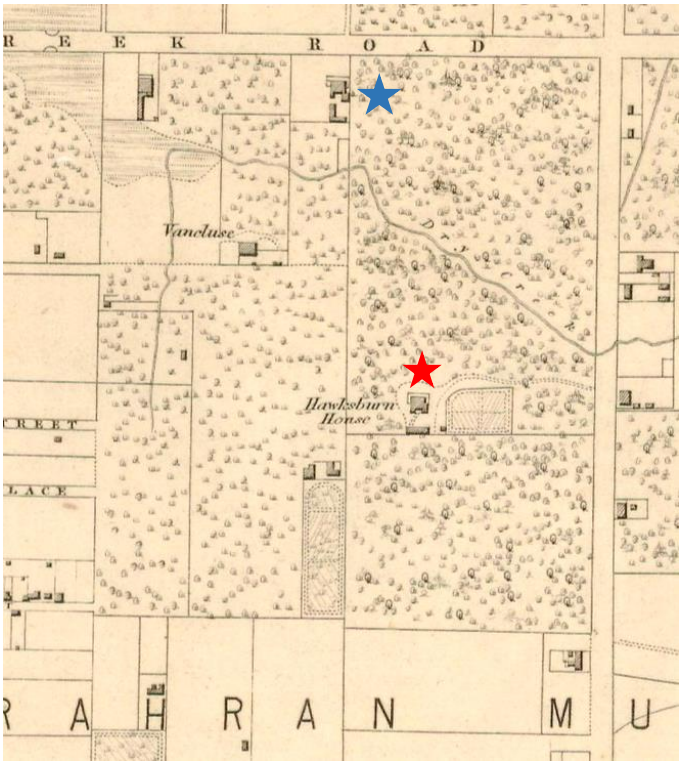


Figure 7. Detail of plan of Melbourne and its suburbs, compiled by James Kearney, 1855, showing Hawksburn House (red star) and Bonnington (blue star) (Source: State Library of Victoria)

In 1878, Arthur Hope purchased the mansion estate, *Bonnington*. Hope demolished the original building and constructed a substantial new residence on the site. A Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Plan of 1896 shows that the land to the south of the mansion remained vacant (Figure 8).

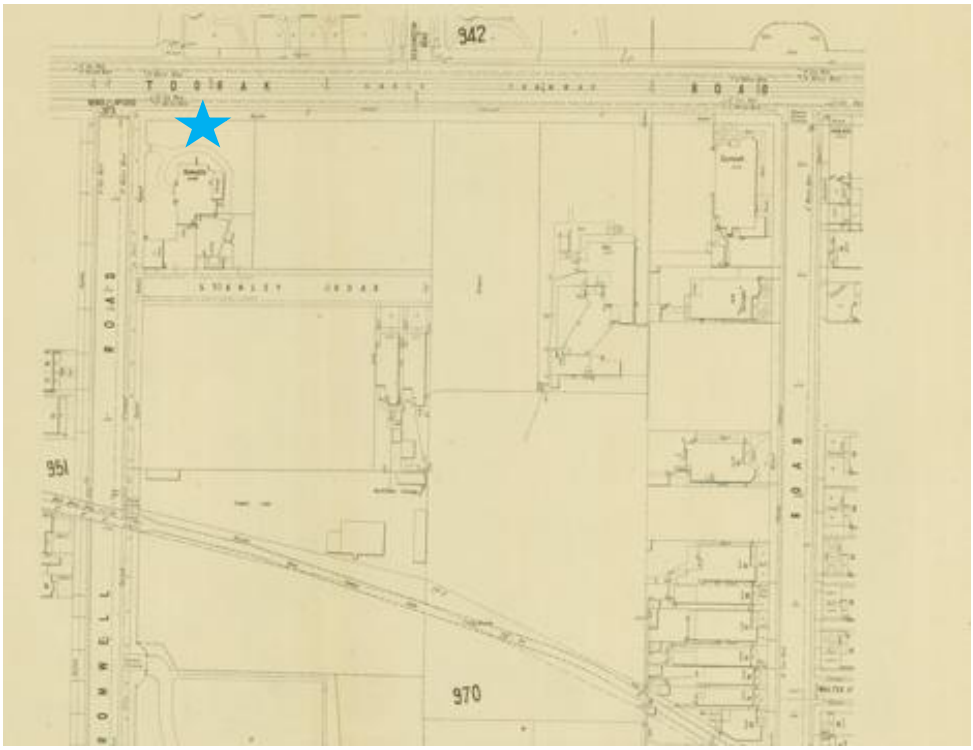


Figure 8. MMBW Detail Plan No 970, City of Prahran, 1896 showing Hope's new residence (indicated by blue star) (Source: State Library of Victoria)

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At the turn of the century, in 1900-1901, Norman McLean purchased the land that would comprise Norman Avenue. He subdivided the land into 11 lots and constructed single-storey brick houses with six or seven rooms on each lot (RB). The street was renamed Norman Avenue from Norman Street around 1909 (RB). The houses are clearly visible on a 1945 aerial photograph of the area (Figure 9).



Figure 9. Aerial photograph showing Norman Avenue (precinct indicated in red), 1945 (Source: Landata Victoria)

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Description

The Norman Avenue Precinct is located to the south of Toorak Road and south-west of the main intersection of Toorak Road and Williams Road, South Yarra. The small cul-de-sac comprises eleven (11) Late Victorian-era properties – four on the north side of Norman Avenue (even numbers 2-8), five on the south side of Norman Avenue (odd numbers 1-9) and two at the west end of Norman Avenue (numbers 10 and 12). Sites are generally rectangular (number 2 has an angled front boundary and number 12 is a wedge-shaped property), and all houses are setback from the street boundaries behind front gardens.

This precinct consists of single-storey bichromatic (some overpainted) brick houses, constructed in the Late Victorian period and also displaying some characteristics of the early Federation period. Constructed within a short period of time, the houses are highly consistent in scale and materiality and display similar forms and detailing. Rectangular in form with hipped roofs, principal elevations are predominantly asymmetrical (numbers 7 and 10 are symmetrical) with projecting gable-ended bays. Roofs are clad with slate, eaves are bracketed and chimneys are of bichromatic brickwork with corbelled capping. Front gable ends are variously decorated, the majority with circular or diamond-shaped shaped vents, timber strapwork and a rough cement render finish, and the bays contain timber-framed windows of various forms including segmental arched window heads and pairs of tall rectangular windows. At number 12, the projecting bay is polygonal with single rectangular windows at each face. Corrugated sheet metal-roofed verandahs extend across part of the principal elevations, with a variety of cast iron and timber decoration and posts. The symmetrical principal elevation at number 7, with projecting central porch and two shallow gable-ended bays with arch-headed windows, displays similar gable end detailing to the other houses in the precinct, and the elevation at number 10 has no projecting bays or verandah.

Single-storey additions have been made to the rear of the majority of the houses and car parking spaces have been created at the front of a number of properties. Front boundaries are lined with reproduction metal fences on bluestone bases or high brick fences.

Key Features:

- Consistent single-storey houses of the Late Victorian period which also display some characteristics of the early Federation period
- Bichromatic brick construction (some overpainted)
- Slate-clad hipped roofs with bracketed eaves
- Predominantly asymmetrical principal elevations with projecting gable-ended bays
- Decoration to gable-ends including circular or diamond-shaped shaped vents, timber strapwork and a rough cement render finish
- Corrugated sheet metal-roofed front verandahs across part of the principal elevations
- Variety of cast-iron and timber decoration and posts to verandahs
- Variety of timber-framed window forms including tall rectangular, segmental arch-headed and arch-headed windows
- Bichromatic brick chimneys with corbelled capping
- The cul de sac form of Norman Avenue and allotment pattern resulting from the original subdivision of the Bonnington mansion estate.



Figure 10. 1 Norman Avenue

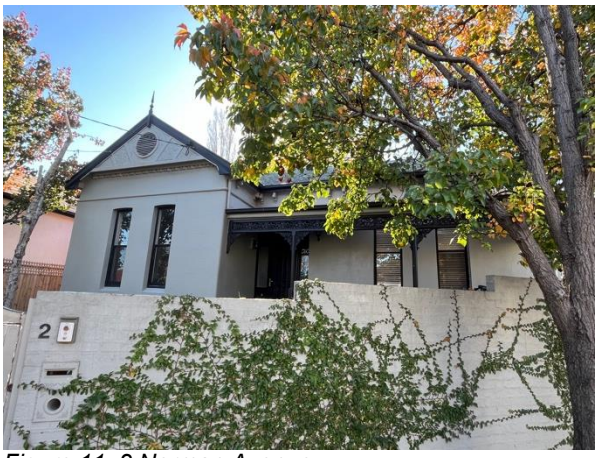


Figure 11. 2 Norman Avenue



Figure 12. 3 Norman Avenue



Figure 13. 4 Norman Avenue



Figure 14. 5 Norman Avenue



Figure 15. 6 Norman Avenue



Figure 16. 7 Norman Avenue



Figure 17. 8 Norman Avenue



Figure 18. 9 Norman Avenue



Figure 19. 10 Norman Avenue



Figure 20. 12 Norman Avenue

Intactness and Integrity

The Norman Avenue Precinct remains substantially intact to its period of construction and retains a high degree of integrity in fabric, form and detail as a turn of the century precinct. While the residences have undergone some minor alterations and additions to the rear, these changes do not diminish the ability to understand and appreciate the place as a finely detailed and cohesive precinct of residences Late Victorian/early Federation residences.

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Assessment Against Criteria

Criteria referred to in *Planning Practice Note No. 1: Applying the Heritage Overlay* (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, August 2018), modified for the local context.

CRITERION A: *Importance to the course or pattern of the City of Stonnington's cultural or natural history (historical significance).*

The Norman Avenue Precinct has strong associations with the development of the municipality in the first part of the twentieth century when Victorian-era mansion estates began to be subdivided and developed following the economic depression of the 1890s. Constructed as part of the subdivision of the Bonnington mansion estate, the Norman Avenue Precinct clearly illustrates this important phase of development in the City of Stonnington (Criterion A).

CRITERION B: *Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of the City of Stonnington's cultural or natural history (rarity).*

N/A

CRITERION C: *Possession to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the City of Stonnington's cultural or natural history (research potential).*

N/A

CRITERION D: *Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of class of cultural or natural places or environments (representativeness).*

The Norman Avenue Precinct is a cohesive collection of fine and substantially intact representative examples of Late Victorian houses with some early Federation detailing. The majority of houses in the precinct display typical features of this period, including bichromatic brick construction, asymmetrical forms, hipped roofs clad in slate, front verandahs with cast iron or timber decoration and posts, gable-ends with decorative vents, timber strapwork and roughcast render finish and prominent corbelled bichromatic brick chimneys (Criterion D).

CRITERION E: *Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics (aesthetic significance).*

The Norman Avenue Precinct forms a highly unified group of residences dating to the early 1900s and constructed in a predominantly Late Victorian-style with some detailing from the early Federation period. The highly consistent materials, setbacks and detailing of the buildings – in conjunction with the garden settings – creates a picturesque and cohesive streetscape. The precinct demonstrates a high degree of consistency in scale, materiality and detailing and has a distinctive architectural character (Criterion E).

CRITERION F: *Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.*

N/A

CRITERION G: *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 their continuing cultural traditions (social significance).*

N/A

CRITERION H: *Special association with the life or works of a period, or group of persons, of importance in the City of Stonnington's history (associative significance).*

N/A

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Gradings and Recommendations

It is recommended that the properties remain in the Heritage Overlay as a Heritage Precinct known as *Norman Avenue Precinct* (HO383).

Recommendations for the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay (Clause 43.01) to the Stonnington Planning Scheme:

External paint controls *Is a permit required to paint an already painted surface?*	No
Internal alteration controls *Is a permit required for internal alterations?*	No
Tree controls *Is a permit required to remove a tree?*	No
Solar energy system controls *Solar energy system controls apply?*	Yes
Outbuildings and fences exemptions *Are there outbuildings or fences which are not exempt from notice and review?*	No
Victorian Heritage Register *Is this place included on the Victorian Heritage Register?*	No
Prohibited uses may be permitted *Can a permit be granted to use for a use which would otherwise be prohibited?*	No
Aboriginal heritage place *Is the place an Aboriginal heritage place which is subject to the requirements of the* Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006?	No
Incorporated Plan *Does an incorporated plan apply to the site?*	No

Gradings of individual properties within the precinct are recommended as follows and as shown in Figure 21:

Number	Address	Grading
1	Norman Avenue	Contributory
2	Norman Avenue	Contributory
3	Norman Avenue	Contributory
4	Norman Avenue	Contributory
5	Norman Avenue	Contributory
6	Norman Avenue	Contributory
7	Norman Avenue	Contributory

8	Norman Avenue	Contributory
9	Norman Avenue	Contributory
10	Norman Avenue	Contributory
12	Norman Avenue	Contributory



Figure 21. Grading map.

Previous Assessments

City of Stonnington Heritage Overlay Gap Study, Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, 2009.

References

Context Pty Ltd, *Stonnington Thematic Environmental History*, 2006.

Landata Victoria, Central Plan Office, Historical Aerial Photography, 1945.

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan No 970, City of Prahran, 1896.

Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Plan No 13, City of Prahran, 1895.

Prahran Rate Books, various dates.

Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), Parish and Townships Plans collection.

State Library of Victoria, map collection.