City of
STONNINGTON

Terrace Houses

Prepared by: GJM Heritage (March 2025)

Address: 31 & 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra.

Name:	Terrace Houses	**Survey Date:**	July 2024
Place Type:	Residential	**Architect/Designer:**	Not known
Grading:	Significant (HO797)	**Builder:**	Not known
Extent of the Overlay:	To extent of both property boundaries – see Figure 17	**Construction Date(s):**	1892-93



Figure 1. 31 & 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra (GJM Heritage, July 2024)

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The pair of Terrace Houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra, constructed 1892-93.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

- Pair of two-storey terrace houses in the Italianate style of the late Victorian period

- Red brick construction with principal elevations of dichromatic brown and red brick and cement render highlighting
- Parapeted front elevations concealing main hipped roofs, with rear hipped-roof wings (no. 31 slate-clad)
- Large, rendered brick chimneys with rendered capping
- Wing walls at side boundaries and party wall between properties, forming recessed front verandahs and balconies
- Decorative cast iron decoration to verandahs and balconies including friezes, brackets, balustrading and columns
- Decorative classical render detailing to brick wing walls including scrolled volute capitals, sections of entablature with patera-like motifs and crowning orbs
- Decorative brick parapet with rendered bracketed entablature with obelisks above the pilasters
- Full-height timber sash windows at ground and first floor
- Timber front doors with glazed sidelights and highlights.

Rear additions do not contribute to the significance of the place. While the front fence is consistent with the architectural period of the properties, it is of more recent construction and does not contribute to the significance of the place.

How is it significant?

The Terrace Houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra are of local historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The Terrace Houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra have strong associations with the development of South Yarra in the boom-years of the 1880s and early 1890s, when subdivided land in the south-east quadrant of the suburb was sold for middle-class residential development, largely due to the establishment of the Oakleigh railway line and Hawksburn railway station in 1879. The terrace pair at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road remain highly intact to clearly demonstrate this phase of development in the City of Stonnington (Criterion A).

The Terrace Houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra are a fine and highly intact representative example of a pair of two-storey late Victorian terrace houses. They display typical characteristics of the Italianate style of the Victorian period, including elaborate parapeted front elevations of dichromatic brickwork with cement render highlighting, recessed verandahs and balconies with decorative cast iron friezes, brackets, balustrading and columns, decorative render detailing including classical elements and motifs and obelisks topping the parapet, large rendered brick chimneys with capping, full height timber-framed sash windows and timber front doors with glazed sidelights and highlights. The Terrace Houses are highly legible as a high-quality example of Italianate-style housing in the City of Stonnington (Criterion D).

The Terrace Houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra are richly decorated and elaborately executed examples of the Italianate style of the late Victorian period. The rich detailing – including scrolled volute capitals, patera-like motifs, orbs, bracketed entablature and obelisks, along with decorative ironwork including friezes, brackets, balustrading and columns to verandahs and ironwork balconies – presents a highly resolved expression of this architectural style and creates an imposing form within the streetscape (Criterion E).

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Historical Context

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

8 Building suburbs

- 8.2 Middle-class suburbs and the suburban ideal

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.

The land on which the terrace houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road are located formed part of Lot 34 in the Parish of Prahran. Lot 34 – comprising approximately 52 acres (21 hectares) – was offered for sale at the Crown Land sales in June 1849. Lot 34 was beset with drainage problems and attracted a low price. It was purchased by the Estate of the late Dr E B Hobson (Figure 2). A stream running east-west through swampy land at the northern end of the lot and another running north-south in the vicinity of present-day Surrey Road rendered all but the highest ground within the lot impenetrable after rains. The swampy land and streams are evident on the 1855 Kearney map of Melbourne (Figure 3).

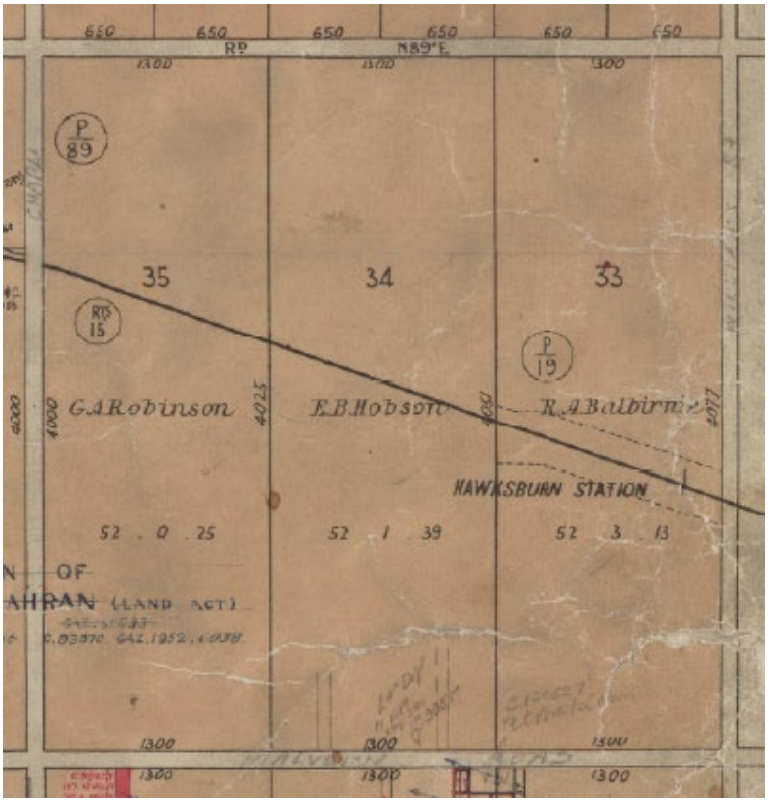


Figure 2. Detail of parish plan, showing Lot 34 with later notations; plan dates to c1880 (Source: Public Record Office Victoria)

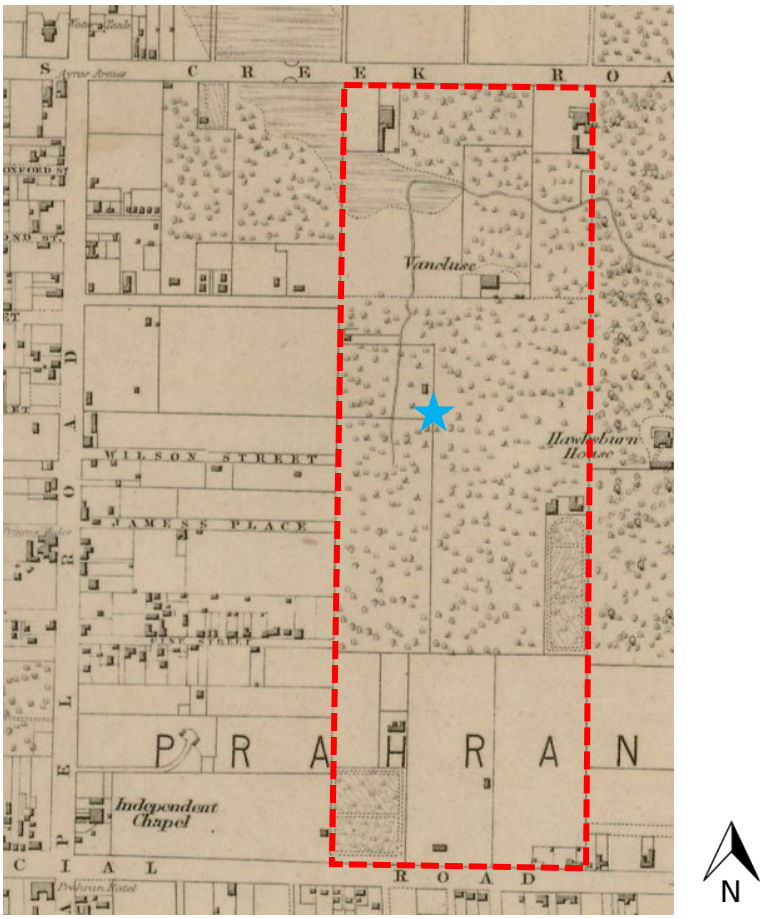


Figure 3. Detail of plan of Melbourne and its suburbs, compiled by James Kearney, 1855 showing land comprising Lot 34. Approximate location of terrace houses indicated by blue star (Source: State Library of Victoria)

The swamp remained a barrier to the creation of roadways to the east of Chapel Street. While Prahran more broadly developed rapidly during the 1850s and 1860s, little attempt was made to develop Hobson's Lot 34 and the area to the east of (the then undeveloped) Surrey Road remained largely vacant.

Improvements to drainage in the 1860s led to the creation of Cromwell and Surrey Roads and allotments along these two roads were made available for sale in 1871 as part of the Dunster Estate. The Dunster Estate subdivision plan (Figure 4) shows Cromwell Road. The subdivision was described in the *Argus* as a 'very valuable estate, subdivided into business building allotments all along the frontages of the Commercial-road and also villa building plots etc…and including the three villa residences known as Monkton, Vaucluse and Dunster-house' (*Argus*, 25 September 1871:2). The terrace houses formed parts of Lots 72 and 79.

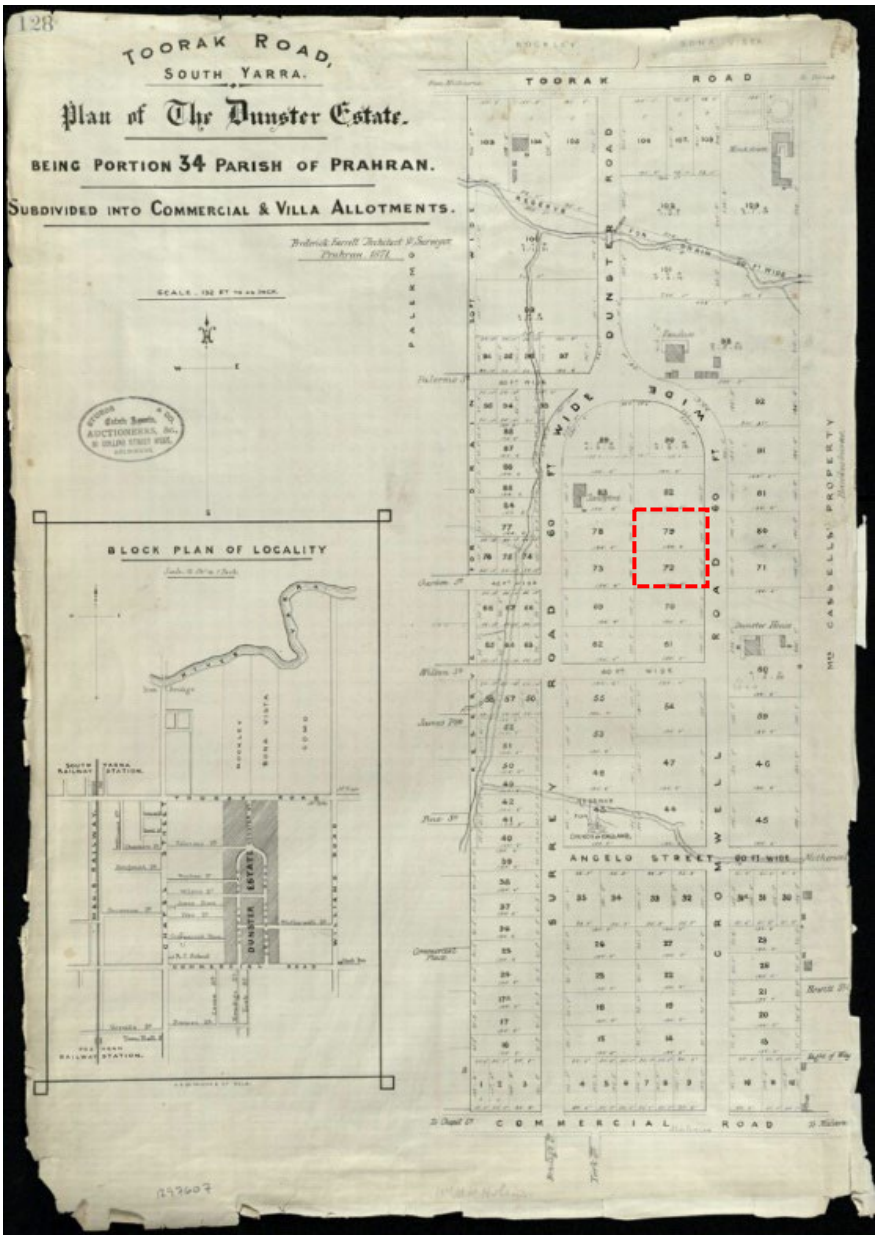


Figure 4. Plan of the Dunster Estate, 1871 showing Lots 72 and 79 (outlined in red) (Source: State Library of Victoria)

Much of the land made available in the 1871 Dunster Estate subdivision remained unsold and the Railways Department subsequently purchased a tract through the northern section of the subdivision to allow for the construction of the Oakleigh Railway in 1879. In 1880 surplus railway lands were auctioned in Cromwell, Surrey and Barnsbury roads. Cromwell Road was particularly slow in selling. With the advent of the railway, the construction of St Martin's Church and the Presbyterian Church in Cromwell Road, and the 1880s boom more generally, development in the central sections of Lot 34 finally commenced in earnest. Large allotments, unsold since their release during the 1870s, were purchased and subdivided (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Dunster Estate, 1887 showing allotments in Cromwell Road. Approximate location of the terrace houses is indicated by blue star (Source: State Library of Victoria)

The pair of two-storey brick terrace houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra were constructed in 1892-93 for Oliver Crawford, each with eight rooms and a basement level (RB 1892-93). The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan of 1895 (Figure 6) shows the original footprint of the terrace houses. Verandahs extended across the front of each house and gardens were located to the front and rear of each property. The houses were occupied by William M Walker, an importer (no 31), and Reverend Mervyn Whitton (no 33) in 1895 (S&M). 31 Cromwell Road was known as 'Verona' in 1904 (*Australasian,* 13 February 1904:55).

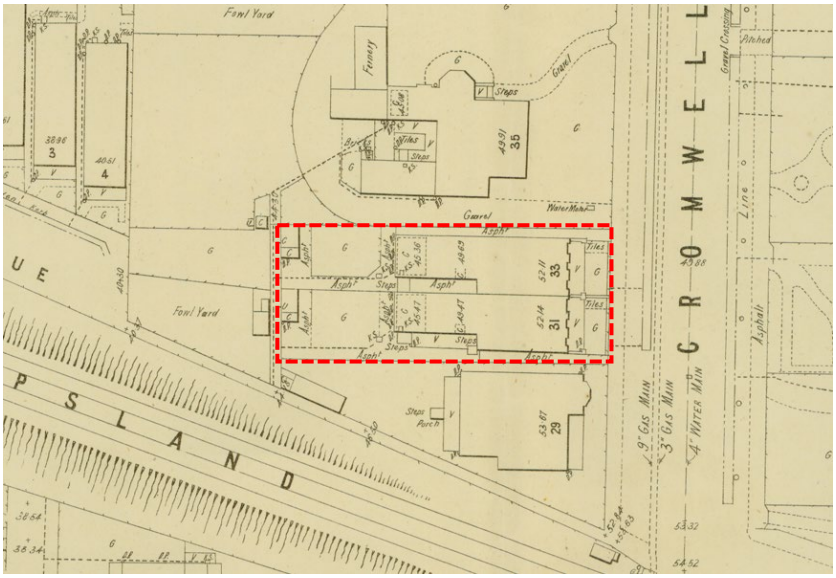


Figure 6. MMBW Detail Plan No 956 of Prahran, 1895 showing the footprints of the terrace pair at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, indicated by red rectangle (Source: State Library of Victoria)

A 1945 aerial photograph shows the footprint of the terrace houses in the mid-twentieth century (Figure 7). Internal alterations were undertaken at 31 Cromwell Road in the mid-1980s (Prahran Valuation Records). Sales advertisements in *The Age* in the 1980s noted that both houses comprised living, family and dining rooms, kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor; three bedrooms and additional bathroom on first floor; and original features including stained glass windows, arches, rosettes and marble fireplaces (*The Age,* 22 October 1983:62; *The Age,* 13 October 1984:78, Figures 8 and 9).

Both houses remain highly intact externally.



Figure 7. Aerial photograph showing the terrace pair at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, 1945, indicated by red outline (Source: Landata Victoria)

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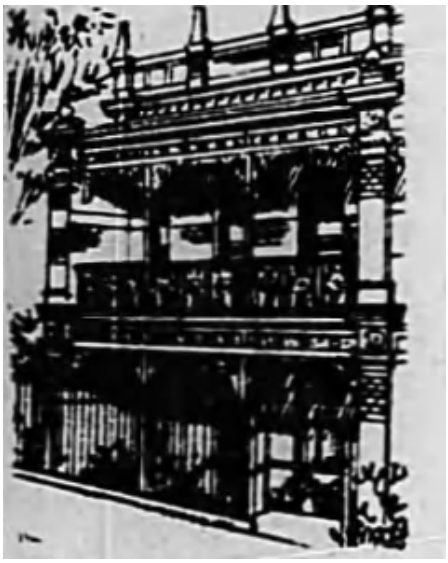


Figure 8. Photograph of 33 Cromwell Road accompanying a sales article, 1983 (Source: The Age, 31 October 1983:17)

Figure 9. Illustration of 31 Cromwell Road accompanying a sales advertisement, 1984 (Source: The Age, 13 October 1984: 78)

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Description

The pair of terrace houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra are located on the west side of Cromwell Road, south-west of the main intersection of Toorak Road and Williams Road and directly north of the railway line from Melbourne to Hawskburn and beyond. The rectangular sites, with modest setbacks, are set slightly below street level with pedestrian access via centrally located pedestrian gates and stairs set parallel to the street boundary. Rear access is provided at the outer boundaries of each property.

Constructed of red brick, the two-storey terrace houses present highly decorative parapeted elevations to the street, concealing main hipped roofs, with rear hipped-roof wings at the rear (no. 31 is slate-clad). Three large, rendered brick chimneys with rendered capping are located at the front of each house and at the rear wing of no. 31. The front elevation is of dichromatic brickwork, combining dark brown and red brick and render highlighting.

Wing walls flank and divide the two front elevations, forming recessed front verandahs at ground level and balconies at first floor level, decorated with cast iron friezes, brackets and balustrading, and supported on cast iron columns. Brick wing walls are classically decorated with cement render detailing which includes scrolled volute capitals, sections of entablature with patera-like motifs and crowning orbs. The brick parapet, with rendered bracketed entablature, is dominated by seven obelisks above the pilasters. Timber main entrance doors, with glazed sidelights and highlight, are located at the north end of the verandahs, with pairs of full-height timber sash windows to the south. Each terrace has three full-height sash windows at the upper-level.

Additions have been made at the rear of both properties and a non-original metal palisade fence lines the front boundaries.

Key features:

- Pair of two-storey terrace houses in the Italianate style of the late Victorian period
- Red brick construction with principal elevations of dichromatic brown and red brick and cement render highlighting
- Parapeted front elevations concealing main hipped roofs, with rear hipped-roof wings (no. 31 slate-clad)
- Large, rendered brick chimneys with rendered capping
- Wing walls at side boundaries and party wall between properties, forming recessed front verandahs and balconies
- Decorative cast iron decoration to verandahs and balconies including friezes, brackets, balustrading and columns
- Decorative classical render detailing to brick wing walls including scrolled volute capitals, sections of entablature with patera-like motifs and crowning orbs
- Decorative brick parapet with rendered bracketed entablature with obelisks above the pilasters
- Full-height timber sash windows at ground and first floor
- Timber front doors with glazed sidelights and highlights.

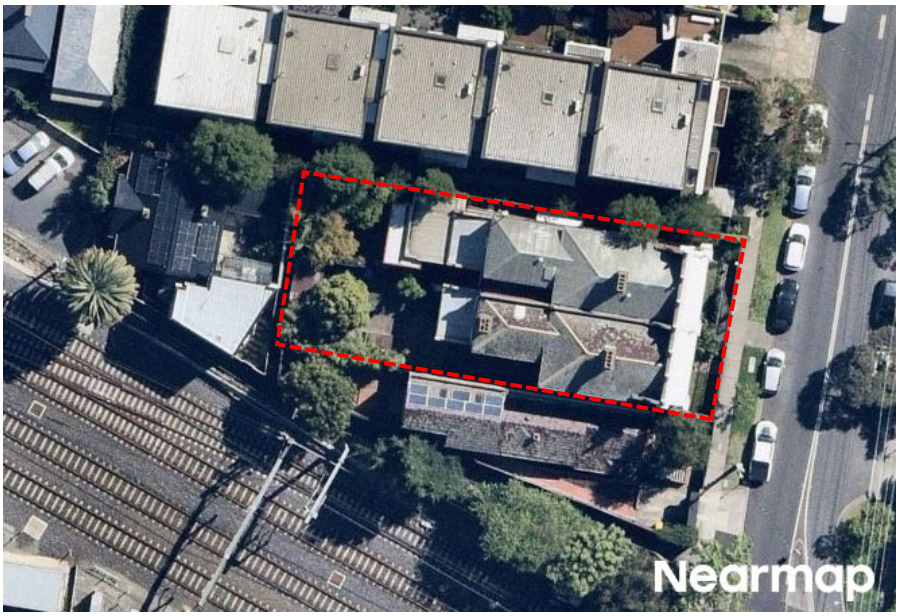


Figure 10. Aerial photograph of 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra (Source: Nearmap, dated 9 October 2024)



Figure 11. 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, front elevation (GJM Heritage, 2024)



Figure 12. 31 Cromwell Road, front elevation (GJM Heritage, 2024)



Figure 13. 33 Cromwell Road, front elevation (GJM Heritage, 2024)

Intactness and Integrity

The terrace houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra remain highly intact to their period of construction. The houses retain a very high degree of integrity as a pair of late-Victorian terrace houses.

Comparative Analysis

The terrace houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra are a distinctive and elaborately detailed example of a late-Victorian terrace pair constructed in the City of Stonnington.

The western part of the City of Stonnington, including South Yarra, was first surveyed and sold by the Crown from 1840 to 1850, only three years after Melbourne. The close proximity to the village of Melbourne and the favourable topography of the high ground overlooking the Yarra quickly established it as a desirable place for settlement. Cycles of speculation and development continued in South Yarra from the 1840s into the 1880s, when Melbourne experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity, growth and development (Context 2006:37-41). A substantial number of Victorian houses, including a number of brick terrace houses built at the end of the boom period, remain in the municipality in varying states of intactness to demonstrate this historic period of development.

A number of late-Victorian terrace houses are included in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme on an individual basis. Those located within the City of Stonnington that are comparable to 31 and 33 Cromwell Road include:

11-13 Cromwell Road, South Yarra (HO228 and HO304)



Figure 14. 11-13 Cromwell Road, South Yarra (Source: GJM Heritage, April 2024)

Grandview and Devon, 45 and 47 Darling Street, South Yarra (HO560)



Figure 15. 45 & 47 Darling Street, South Yarra (Source: Google Street View, July 2022)

3, 5, 7 and 9 Kensington Road, South Yarra (HO561)



Figure 16. 3, 5, 7, & 9 Kensington Road, South Yarra (Source: GJM Heritage, April 2024)

Like the terrace houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra, the above terrace houses were constructed in what is now the City of Stonnington in the late nineteenth century boom period. These brick terrace houses exhibit a range of characteristics representative of Italianate terrace housing of the late Victorian period, including parapeted front elevations concealing hipped roofs, wing walls at side boundaries and party wall between properties forming recessed front verandahs and balconies, and cast-iron decoration to verandahs and balconies including friezes, brackets, balustrading and columns. Like the above examples, 31 and 33 Cromwell Road retain a high degree of integrity to their period of construction and remain highly intact to demonstrate a range of highly decorative characteristics of the Victorian Italianate style in the City of Stonnington. The elaborate decorative detailing on 31 and 33 Cromwell Road is at least the equal of the other examples included in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme. Similar to the Victorian terrace houses included in the Heritage Overlay of the Stonnington Planning Scheme, the terrace houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road clearly demonstrate an important phase in the historical development of the City of Stonnington.

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 Terrace Houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra have strong associations with the development of South Yarra in the boom-years of the 1880s and early 1890s, when subdivided land in the south-east quadrant of the suburb was sold for middle-class residential development, largely due to the establishment of the Oakleigh railway line and Hawksburn railway station in 1879. The terrace pair at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road remain highly intact to clearly demonstrate this phase of development in the City of Stonnington.

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

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

The Terrace Houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra are a fine and highly intact representative example of a pair of two-storey late Victorian terrace houses. They display typical characteristics of the Italianate style of the Victorian period, including elaborate parapeted front elevations of dichromatic brickwork with cement render highlighting, recessed verandahs and balconies with decorative cast iron friezes, brackets, balustrading and columns, decorative render detailing including classical elements and motifs and obelisks topping the parapet, large rendered brick chimneys with capping, full height timber-framed sash windows and timber front doors with glazed sidelights and highlights. The Terrace Houses are highly legible as a high-quality example of Italianate-style housing in the City of Stonnington.

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

The Terrace Houses at 31 and 33 Cromwell Road, South Yarra are richly decorated and elaborately executed examples of the Italianate style of the late Victorian period. The rich detailing – including scrolled volute capitals, patera-like motifs, orbs, bracketed entablature and obelisks, along with decorative ironwork including friezes, brackets, balustrading and columns to verandahs and ironwork balconies – presents a highly resolved expression of this architectural style and creates an imposing form within the streetscape.

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

Grading and Recommendations

31 and 33 Cromwell Road are an individually significant terrace pair that are currently included in HO137 – Hawksburn Precinct. It is recommended they be removed from HO137 due to their geographical isolation from the balance of the precinct and be included in a site-specific Heritage Overlay in recognition of their individual significance. Due to the shared history and design of the two properties, it is recommended that 31 and 33 Cromwell Road are combined within a single Heritage Overlay (HO797, see Figure 17).

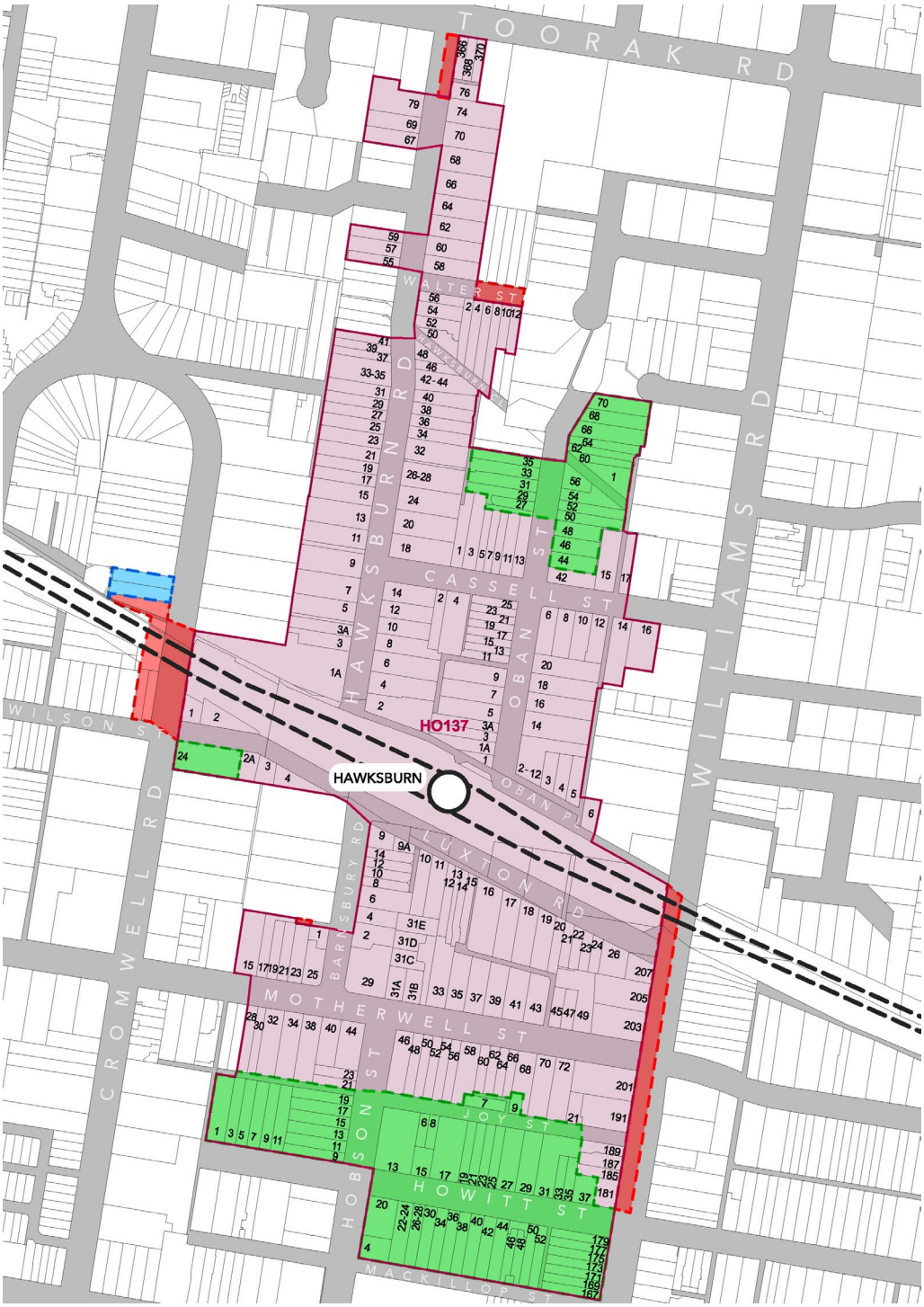


Figure 17. Recommended changes to extent of HO137

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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

Extent of Overlay

To the extent of the property boundaries, as shown in Figure 17 below.



References

Argus.

Australasian.

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

Context Pty Ltd, Stonnington Thematic Environmental History, 2006.

Google Street View.

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

Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan Nos 956, City of Prahran, 1895.

Nearmap.

Prahran Valuation Records.

Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), Parish and Township plans collection.

Sands and McDougall (S&M) Street Directory, various dates.

State Library of Victoria, map collection.

The Age.