City of
STONNINGTON

Dulverton Flats

Prepared by: GJM Heritage (March 2025)

Address: 379 Toorak Road, South Yarra

Name:	Dulverton Flats	**Survey Date:**	April 2024
Place Type:	Residential	**Architect/Designer:**	F L & K Klingender.
Grading:	Significant (HO171)	**Builder:**	Not known
Extent of the Overlay:	To property boundaries	**Construction Date(s):**	c1929



379 Toorak Road, South Yarra (GJM Heritage, April 2024)

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

Dulverton Flats at 379 Toorak Road, South Yarra, constructed c1929.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

- Two-storey block of flats in the Interwar Mediterranean style
- Rendered brick construction
- Multiple tile-clad hipped roofs with broad ventilated eaves
- Tall rendered brick chimneys with ribbed capping
- L-shaped plan with longer elevation to the side road (Kensington Road)
- Upper-balconies contained within the hipped roof form with verandah below comprising a row of broad piers across the façade
- Staircases with metal balustrading providing access to the upper level through arched openings

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- Broadly symmetrical elevation to Toorak Road
- Dominant classically-inspired central entrance porticoes to both elevations comprising framing piers, double arcaded opening at ground level and colonnade above with nameplates comprising raised lettering 'Dulverton' and two panels of arabesque ornament and shields to Toorak Road elevation
- Frameless arched openings to balconies and verandahs
- Groups of two or three timber-framed double-hung sash windows.

The perimeter boundary fencing does not contribute to the significance of the place.

How is it significant?

Dulverton Flats at 379 Toorak Road, South Yarra, is of local historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

The Dulverton Flats, 379 Toorak Road, South Yarra have strong associations with the development of the municipality in the interwar period. This period of development transformed the built environment and social character of the area by replacing substantial mansion estates with higher density flat and apartment developments. This was largely a result of rising labour and materials costs following World War I, which made the cost of maintaining grand Victorian and Federation-era mansions difficult and led to a significant increase in the subdivision of large estates across the municipality. Constructed on land that was previously occupied by a large single residence, Dulverton Flats clearly illustrates the important interwar phase of development in the City of Stonnington (Criterion A).

The Dulverton Flats, 379 Toorak Road, South Yarra are a fine and substantially intact representative example of interwar residential flat design. The building displays typical characteristics of the Mediterranean style of the Interwar period, including rendered brick walls and tall rendered brick chimneys, tile-clad hipped roofs with broad eaves, classically-inspired treatments to entrances, metalwork to balconies and staircases, and frameless arched openings (Criterion D).

Constructed to a design by architects F L & K Klingender, the Dulverton Flats, 379 Toorak Road, South Yarra, represents an accomplished example of the Interwar Mediterranean style applied to a flat development. The refined detailing, including the multiple tile-clad gabled-roof forms, recessed upper balconies and verandahs with frameless arched openings, exposed staircases with decorative steel balustrading, tall chimneys and classically-inspired entrance porticoes with framing piers, double arcaded openings at ground level and colonnade above with nameplates and panels of arabesque ornament and shields, presents a highly resolved expression of this architectural style, creating an imposing form within the streetscape (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

- 8.6 Developing higher density living

- 8.6.2 Developing apartment living

Place History

Dulverton Flats were built as a two-storey block of apartments on the corner of Toorak Road and Kensington Road, South Yarra in c1929, replacing a large residence known as 'Kenwyn'.

In the mid-1800s, large houses to the north of the subject site were built on the high ridge overlooking the Yarra River. The subdivision of one of these properties – Bona Vista – in 1882 created Kensington Road, which was formed from the driveway of this estate. The Bona Vista estate was owned by physician and naturalist and member of the prominent colonial Hobson family, Dr Edmund Charles Hobson, who purchased an approximately 8.7 hectare (21 acre) allotment with the Yarra River at the northern boundary in 1844. On this land, Hobson built a house which he named Bona Vista on the elevated portion overlooking the Yarra River (Figure 1). Major subdivision of the estate took place between 1877 and 1882 and Kensington Road was formed from Toorak Road to the original Bona Vista residence (Figure 2).



Figure 1. Melbourne and its suburbs, Map 4, James Kearney, 1855, showing the location of the Bona Vista Estate (Source: State Library of Victoria)

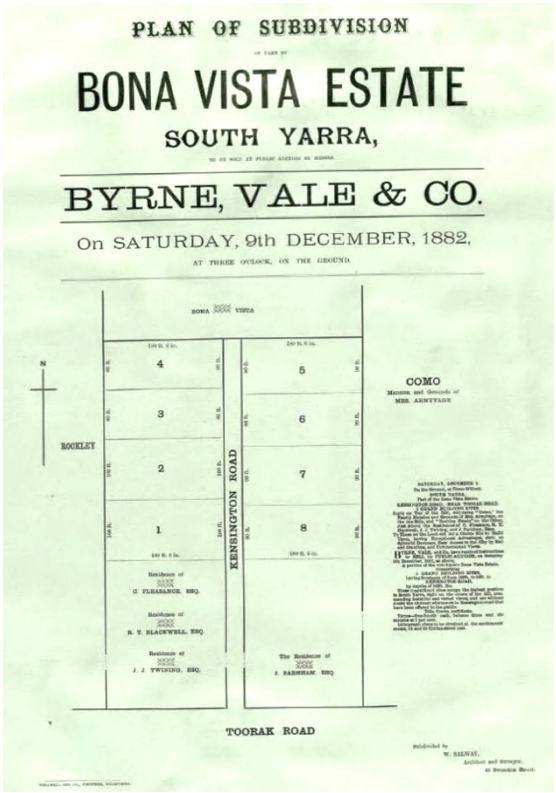


Figure 2. Subdivision sale of the Bona Vista Estate, 1882 (Source: State Library of Victoria)

A Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan 942, dated 1896 indicates that much of Kensington Road was highly developed by the late nineteenth century, including the large property at the east side of Toorak Road known as 'Kenwyn' (Figure 3).

'Kenwyn' was subsequently demolished and the land subdivided further (Figure 4).

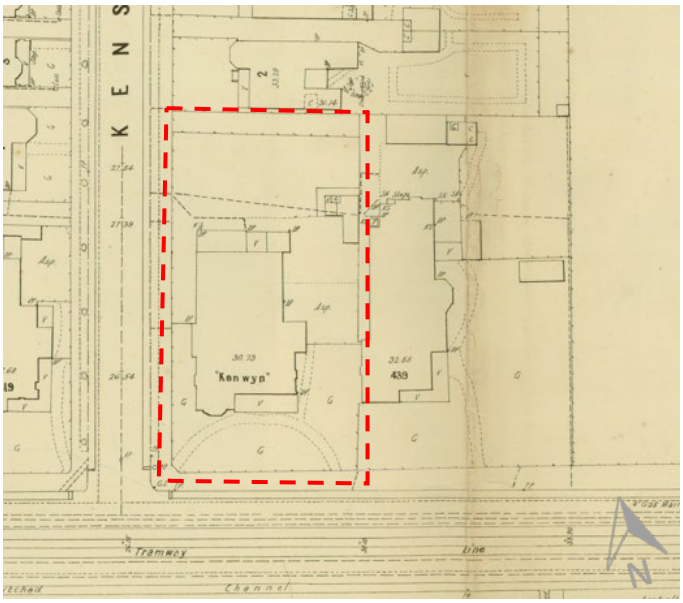


Figure 3. Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan No 942, 1896, showing the large property 'Kenwyn' at the south-east corner of Kensington Road and Toorak Road (Source: State Library of Victoria)

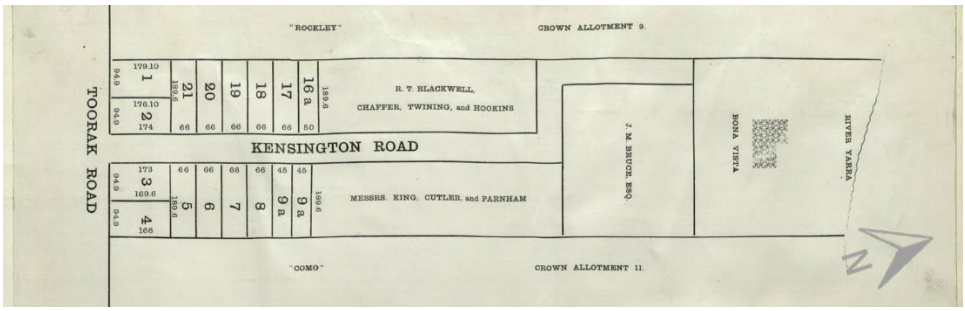


Figure 4. Map of part of South Yarra showing land subdivided at the southern end of Kensington Road, undated (Source: State Library of Victoria).

Dulverton Flats were constructed on the 87ft x 170ft (26.5m x 52m) site for owner Ernest E Wagstaff (RB 1928-1929) to a design by architects F L & K Klingender in 1928 (*Herald*, 5 September 1928:14; *Argus*, 29 June 1929:31). At this time, the flats were described as:

> *Ten self-contained, double-fronted flats of the latest type…The building will be of two-stories, and externally will be treated in smooth cement rendering, with a blended tile roof and wrought-iron balustrades to stairs and balconies* (*Herald*, 5 September 1928:14).

Architect Frederick L Klingender was a well-known twentieth century Melbourne architect who had been an Associate of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects from 1891 and was President in 1935-36 (RVIA Journal, May 1935:39). From 1925, he formed a partnership with his son, Keith, F L & Klingender. The partnership completed several residential designs in the Stonnington area (Lewis Aitken 1992: 60).

The development comprised six two-bedroom flats and four one-bedroom flats, all with private entrances and garages at the rear (Figure 5). These 10 flats were first listed in the Prahran Rate Books in 1929-1930, all with NAV of £160 (RB 1929-30).

Celebrated photographer Wolfgang Sievers resided at Dulverton Flats in 1939, soon after his emigration to Australia from Germany (*The Age*, 1 September 1939:4). Sievers was a renowned photographer who specialised in architectural and industrial photography. On his arrival to Melbourne in 1939, he established his photographic studio at Dulverton Flats (*The Age,* 21 August 1939:13). The flats can be seen in an aerial photograph dating to 1958 (Figure 6).

Owned by the estate of Ernest E Wagstaff, petroleum distributor and chief executive of the Shell Company of Australia Ltd, Dulverton Flats was offered for sale in 1996 (*The Age*, 1 September 1996:2). Described as having 'an elegant façade, fronted by arcades supported on simple round columns' (*The Age*, 24 August 1996:66) the proceeds of the sale, along with those of five other buildings, went to charity (*The Age*, 1 September 1996:2).

Individual apartments at Dulverton Flats were offered for sale the following year, with an advertisement stating that 'the revival of this classic building is complete' (*The Age*, 8 November 1997:153). The advertisement included an illustration showing the flats at the time (Figure 7).

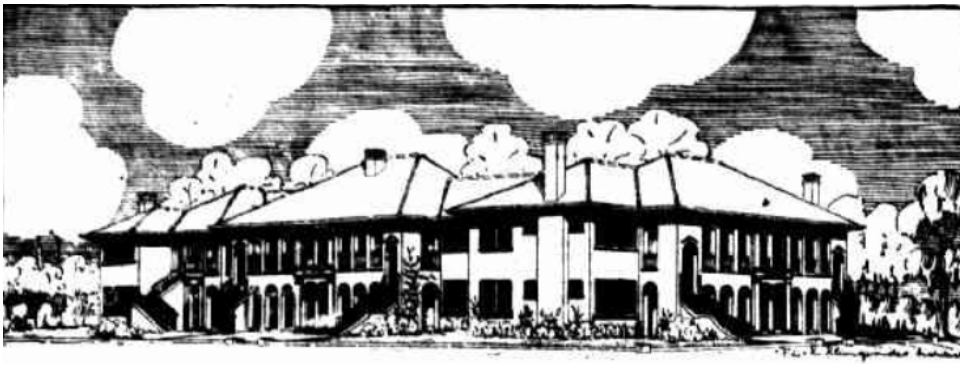


Figure 5. Dulverton Flats in Toorak Road, South Yarra (Source: Herald, 5 September 1928, p 14)



Figure 6. Detail of aerial photograph looking south-west from Como House and Garden, showing the rear of Dulverton Flats, 1958 (Source: Museums Victoria)



Figure 7. Sale of Dulverton, Flats, 1997 (Source: The Age, 8 November 1997, p 153)

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Description

Dulverton Flats are located on the north-east corner at the junction of Toorak Road and Kensington Road, west of the main intersection of Toorak Road and Williams Road. Occupying a generally rectangular site (with dog-leg capturing rear garages), the building is set close to both the Toorak and Kensington Road boundaries, presenting a narrow frontage to Toorak Road and a long frontage to Kensington Road.

Designed in the Interwar Mediterranean style, the two-storey rendered brick block of flats is L-shaped in plan with longer west elevation to Kensington Road. It has tile-clad hipped roofs with broad ventilated eaves which run parallel to the two road boundaries. Three tall rendered brick chimneys and one shorter chimney, all with ribbed capping, rise above the hipped roofs.

Elevations to Toorak Road and Kensington Road (central section) present as broadly symmetrical. These incorporate upper balconies contained within the hipped roof forms, with verandahs below and staircases either end to provide access to the upper-level through arched openings. Dominant, classically-inspired central entrance porticoes provide a central focal point to both elevations (see Figure 6). These are framed by piers and comprise double arcaded openings at ground level, a colonnade above and nameplates, with raised lettering ‘Dulverton’. Two panels of arabesque ornament with shields above decorate the central element of the Toorak Road elevation.

The central element of the Kensington Road elevation is flanked by simply detailed wings with rectangular timber-framed double-hung sash windows (see Figure 7). Arranged in groups of two or three, these windows are used throughout the building and contrast with frameless arched openings which penetrate the verandahs and balconies. Balustrading and stair railings are of steel.

The boundary of the property is marked by a recent decorative fence with fine steel railing between rendered piers.

Key Features:

- Two-storey block of flats in the Interwar Mediterranean style
- Rendered brick construction
- Multiple tile-clad hipped roofs with broad ventilated eaves
- Tall rendered brick chimneys with ribbed capping
- L-shaped plan with longer elevation to the side road (Kensington Road)
- Upper-balconies contained within the hipped roof form with verandah below comprising a row of broad piers across the façade
- Staircases with metal balustrading providing access to the upper level through arched openings
- Broadly symmetrical elevation to Toorak Road
- Dominant classically-inspired central entrance porticoes to both elevations comprising framing piers, double arcaded opening at ground level and colonnade above with nameplates comprising raised lettering ‘Dulverton’ and two panels of arabesque ornament and shields to Toorak Road elevation
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- Groups of two or three timber-framed double-hung sash windows.



Figure 6. Central element to Toorak Road frontage (Source: GJM Heritage, April 2024)



Figure 7. Kensington Road frontage (Source: GJM Heritage, April 2024)

Intactness and Integrity

The Dulverton Flats at 379 Toorak Road, South Yarra remain substantially intact to its period of construction. Despite some refurbishment, including upgrade of access stairs and replacement of perimeter fencing, the place retains a high degree of integrity as an Interwar Mediterranean style flat complex.

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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 Dulverton Flats, 379 Toorak Road, South Yarra have strong associations with the development of the municipality in the interwar period. This period of development transformed the built environment and social character of the area by replacing substantial mansion estates with higher density flat and apartment developments. This was largely a result of rising labour and materials costs following World War I, which made the cost of maintaining grand Victorian and Federation-era mansions difficult and led to a significant increase in the subdivision of large estates across the municipality. Constructed on land that was previously occupied by a large single residence, Dulverton Flats clearly illustrates the important interwar 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

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

The Dulverton Flats, 379 Toorak Road, South Yarra are a fine and substantially intact representative example of interwar residential flat design. The building displays typical characteristics of the Mediterranean style of the Interwar period, including rendered brick walls and tall rendered brick chimneys, tile-clad hipped roofs with broad eaves, classically-inspired treatments to entrances, metalwork to balconies and staircases, and frameless arched openings.

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

Constructed to a design by architects F L & K Klingender, the Dulverton Flats, 379 Toorak Road, South Yarra, represents an accomplished example of the Interwar Mediterranean style applied to a flat development. The refined detailing, including the multiple tile-clad gabled-roof forms, recessed upper balconies and verandahs with frameless arched openings, exposed staircases with decorative steel balustrading, tall chimneys and classically-inspired entrance porticoes with framing piers, double arcaded openings at ground level and colonnade above with nameplates and panels of arabesque ornament and shields, presents a highly resolved expression of this architectural style, creating 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

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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

It is recommended that the property remain in the Heritage Overlay as an individual Heritage Place (HO171). It is recommended that the 'Heritage place name' column within the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay be updated to:

Dulverton Flats
379 Toorak Road, South Yarra

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

No change. Heritage Overlay extent to remain to the property boundaries.

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Previous Assessment

City of Stonnington Heritage Overlay Report, Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, 1998

City of Prahran Conservation Review, Context Pty Ltd, 1993

References

Argus.

Bryce Raworth Pty Ltd, *City of Stonnington Heritage Overlay Report*, 1998.

Context Pty Ltd, *City of Prahran Conservation Review*, 1993.

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

Herald.

Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan No 942, dated 1896.

Museum Victoria, picture collection.

Nigel Lewis Richard Aitkin Pty Ltd, *City of Malvern Heritage Study,* 1992.

Prahran Rate Books (RB), as cited.

State Library of Victoria, map collection.

The Age.