City of
STONNINGTON

St Martin's Anglican Church Complex

Prepared by: GJM Heritage (March 2025)

Address: 27, 27A and 27B Cromwell Road, South Yarra

Name:	St Martin's Anglican Church Complex	**Survey Date:**	May 2024
Place Type:	Church complex	**Architect/Designer:**	Edmund G Ovey (Church 1883) (Vicarage - likely Ovey) A & K Henderson, Alsop & Martin (Tower addition 1922) D F Stevenson (Parish Hall 1927).
Grading:	Significant (HO28) – see Recommendations	**Builder:**	Francis W Beaven (1883-1886) Messrs. Armstrong (1922) McBain Brothers (1927).
Extent of the Overlay:	To the extent of church complex boundaries – see Figure 1	**Construction Date(s):**	1883-1886 (Church) 1883 (Vicarage) 1922 (Tower addition) 1927 (Parish Hall).



St Martin's Anglican Church Complex (L-R, starting top L: St Martin's Church and tower (eastern end), St Martin's Church (western end), Vicarage, Parish Hall)



Figure 1. St Martin's Anglican Church Complex Heritage Overlay Extent, South Yarra (GJM Heritage, July 2024)

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

St Martin's Anglican Church Complex at 27, 27A and 27B Cromwell Road, South Yarra.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

Church

- Brick church building constructed in a Gothic Revival style
- Bluestone base to building
- Steeply-pitched, slate-clad gabled roof with shallow eaves and parapeted gable ends
- Decorative polychromatic brickwork, including elaborate diaper-work and polychromatic voussoirs, and stone dressings
- Crenulated tower with decorative brick frieze, gargoyles and groups of lancet windows which increase in number at each level
- Single lancet windows grouped in two or three, and double lancet windows with roundels
- Large tripartite chancel (east) window
- Stepped angle buttresses at corners
- Three fleches at the ridgeline of the nave
- Pairs of small ventilator gablets below the chancel ridgeline
- Freestanding grey granite memorial cross to the east of the church

Vicarage

- Two-storey rendered brick house constructed in a Gothic Revival style
- Slate-clad roof comprising three parallel gabled roof forms (two principal gables and central small gable), presenting as steep gable ends to the principal elevation
- Symmetrical principal elevation
- Timber work to large gable ends including finials, spiral bracing and cross beams

- Two-storey polygonal window bays to principal front gables with hipped slate-clad roofs, pointed arch-headed windows with decorative label moulds and moulded sills at the upper-level
- Shallow-pitched verandah roof, with decorative ironwork, fitted around polygonal bays
- Central entrance between flanking polygonal bays at ground level
- Three tall, rendered chimneys with corniced capping
- Single-storey rear wing across the rear elevation

Parish Hall

- Single-storey cement-rendered brick building comprising two rectangular forms
- Large tile-clad gabled-roof building, orientated north-south, at rear with parapeted gable ends and buttresses that divide the side elevations into regular window bays
- Gabled-roof form positioned across the north (principal) elevation
- Shallow central pediment with name plate 'Parish Hall', quoined pilasters and remnants of a (demolished) central classically-detailed porch to principal (north) elevation
- Two cement rendered brick gate piers with a pronounced entasis (curved profile) at Cromwell Road boundary and concrete path leading to the Parish Hall.

Later alterations to the rear of the Vicarage and the Parish Hall do not contribute to the significance of the place.

How is it significant?

St Martin's Anglican Church Complex at 27, 27A and 27B Cromwell Road, South Yarra of local historical, representative (architectural), aesthetic and social significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

St Martin's Anglican Church Complex, South Yarra has strong associations with the development of South Yarra after the opening of the Oakleigh railway line in 1879 and establishment of the Hawksburn Railway Station. Subsequent rapid residential subdivision and the associated growth in population resulted in the provision of churches, and other community buildings, to service the local community. Built in 1883-1886, St Martin's Anglican Church remains highly intact to clearly demonstrate the continuous provision of pastoral care to the South Yarra community from the late nineteenth century, into the twenty-first century (Criterion A).

St Martin's Anglican Church Complex, South Yarra is a fine and highly intact representative example of a late nineteenth century and early twentieth century church complex, comprising a Gothic Revival church and vicarage, and a relatively austere 1920s hall complex. The church displays typical characteristics of the Gothic Revival style, including steeply-pitched slate-clad roofs, brick construction with decorative polychromatic brickwork and stone dressings, crenulated tower, pointed arch-headed windows including single lancet windows and large tripartite chancel window, stepped angled buttresses at corners and fleches at the ridgeline of the nave. The vicarage displays similar characteristics of the Gothic Revival style, including steeply-pitched slate-clad roofs and pointed arch-headed windows set in projecting two-storey polygonal window bays (Criterion D).

St Martin's Anglican Church and Vicarage, South Yarra are assured and well-executed examples of the Gothic Revival style, with both understood to have been designed by architect Edmund G Ovey. The two buildings, with their steeply-pitched gabled roofs and pointed arch-headed windows, present as a cohesive and refined pair of church buildings from the late nineteenth century (Criterion E).

St Martin's Anglican Church and Vicarage, South Yarra is of social significance for its long and continuing use as a community facility in the City of Stonnington. Established in 1883, St Martin's Anglican Church and Vicarage, South Yarra continues to serve the local South Yarra community as a religious institution for the pastoral care of its parishioners (Criterion G).

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Historical Context

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

10 Community and Culture

- 10.2 Worshipping

Place History

St Martin's Anglican Church at the intersection of Cromwell Road and Wilson Street, and the adjoining vicarage were constructed in 1883, the latter as a private residence for the first vicar. A tower was added to the north side of the church in 1922 and a parish hall was constructed to the rear of the vicarage in 1927.

The rapid increase in the South Yarra population in the 1880s led to the Anglican Church purchasing land near the Hawksburn Railway Station to enable establishment of a church in this developing area. A site at the corner of Cromwell Road and Wilson Street, 30.5 metres x 61 metres (100 ft by 200 ft) in size, was acquired for this purpose and architect Edmund Ovey designed a church in the Early English Gothic style. Designed to accommodate 1,200 people, the church was to comprise nave, transepts, chancel, aisles, vestries, organ space, committee room, tower and spire, and schoolroom at the rear; however, the initial stage comprised construction of the chancel only at the eastern end of the site, including the installation of the main three-light chancel window, designed by artist Chester Earles (*Church of England Messenger and Ecclesiastical Gazette*, 11 October 1883:4).

The foundation stone for the church was laid by Sir William J Clarke on 6 September 1883, in place of his ill wife, Lady Clarke, whose name is noted on the stone (*Argus*, 7 September 1883:6). Built by Francis W Beaven to accommodate nearly 300 people, the chancel was opened on 14 December 1883 (*Argus*, 14 December 1883:9). A temporary timber nave was added to the west the following year, with a permanent nave completed in 1886 (Figure 2). Also constructed by builder F W Beaven, the 1886 works included a Sunday School below the church at the west end (*Herald*, 6 December 1886:4) (Figure 4).

The first vicar of the church, Rev W K Brodribb, acquired the adjoining allotment in Cromwell Road in 1883 and built a two-storey, 10-roomed brick house for his own use (Rate Books; C W Kett:3) (Figures 3-5). In 1915 this house, known as Martinhurst (MMBW 1896), was purchased by the Trustees of the church for use as the church vicarage (C W Kett:21).



Figure 2. St Martin's Anglican Church, Hawksburn,1886 (Source: C W Kett)

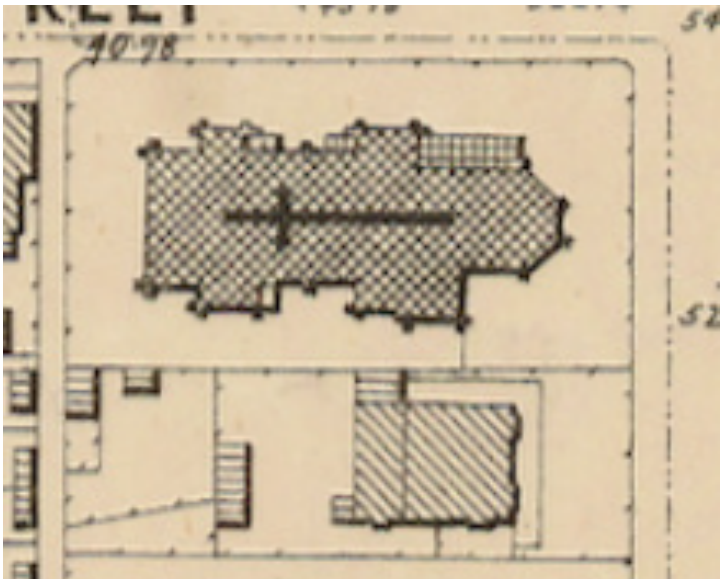


Figure 3. Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) City of Prahran Plan No. 37, 1895, showing the church and adjacent house, later the church vicarage (Source: State Library of Victoria)

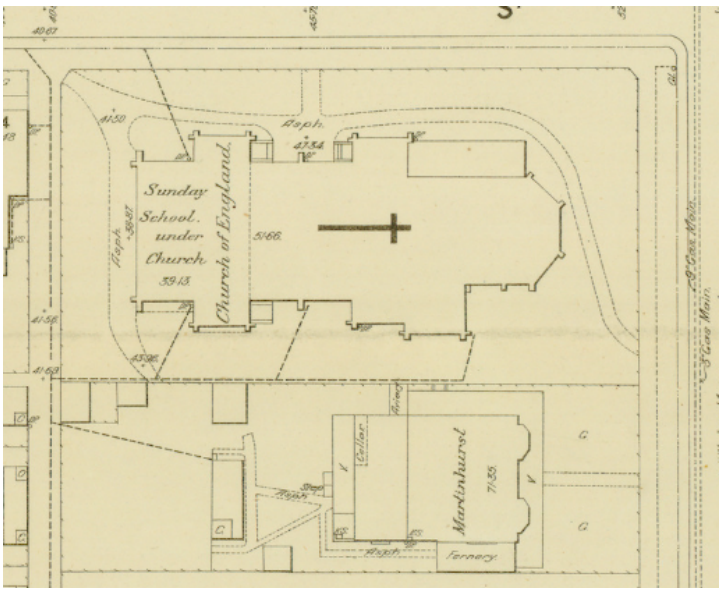


Figure 4. MMBW Detail Plan No 982, City of Prahran, 1896 showing the church and house, later church vicarage (Source: State Library of Victoria)



Figure 5. Rectory of the Church of England Church, Cromwell Road c1900 (Source: Stonnington History Centre).

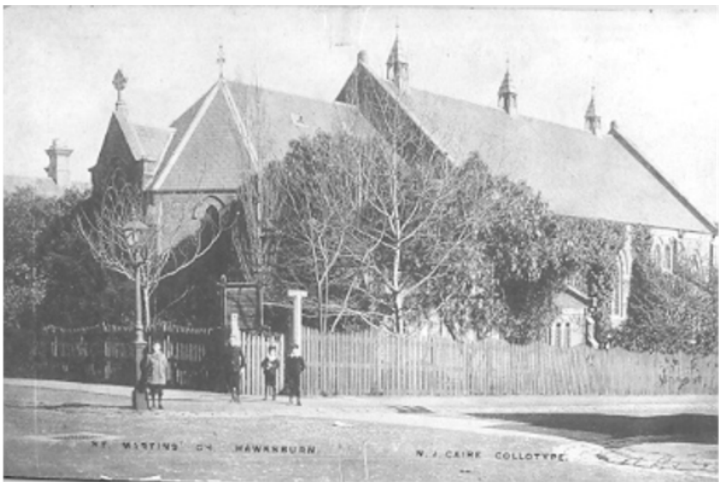


Figure 6. St Martin's Anglican Church, c1900, N J Caire (Source: Stonnington History Centre).

A decision was made in 1921 to erect a tower and new vestries at the north side of the church and A & K Henderson, Alsop and Martin were appointed architects for the work (C W Kett:17). Erected in memory of 13 men of the parish who lost their lives in World War 1, the foundation stone was laid in June 1922 (*Prahran Telegraph*, 2 June 1922:5). The tower was constructed between two existing bays, with the bay to the east either altered or replaced during this construction phase (Figures 7-8). A memorial cross was also erected in the church grounds in April 1921 (C W Kett:19).

To increase room for the Sunday School and provide space for social purposes, a parish hall was built to the south-west of the church and at the rear of the vicarage in 1927 (Figure 9). Designed by architect D F Stevenson and built by Mc Bain Brothers, the hall was accessed via a set of gates and a path from Cromwell Road, located between the church and vicarage (*Herald*, 16 March 1927:13). The foundation stone was laid on 13 March 1927 and the building, comprising a main hall with stage, a large club room, supper room and kitchen was opened by Archbishop Lees on 2 July 1927 (C W Kett:23). The porch at the principal entry to the parish hall has been demolished. Telecommunications infrastructure, positioned on the roof of the tower, was first added in 2009, and reconstructed in 2013.

The church continues to operate as the St Martin's Church of England.



Figure 7. Detail of aerial Photograph of South Yarra, 1945, showing the church with tower to north, vicarage and parish hall (Source: Landata Victoria)



Figure 8. View of the church from the north-east, showing tower, John T Collins, 1967 (Source: State Library of Victoria)

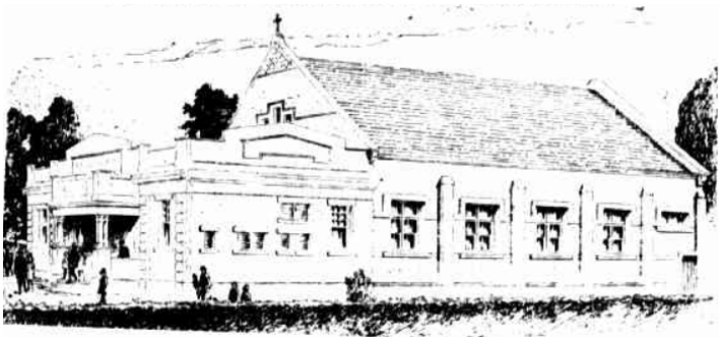


Figure 9. St Martin's Parish Hall, Hawksburn, 1927 (Source: Herald, 16 March 1927: 13)

Description

St Martin's Anglican Church, Vicarage and Parish Hall are located on a south-west corner site at the junction of Cromwell Street and Wilson Street, north-west of the main intersection of Malvern Road and Williams Road, South Yarra. The church is located to the north of the site, with the vicarage to the south-east facing Cromwell Street and the hall to the south-west, at the rear of the vicarage.

Designed in a Gothic Revival style and set on a bluestone plinth, the church is built of dark brick with contrasting red and cream brickwork - including elaborate diaper-work and polychromatic voussoirs - stone dressings and steeply-pitched slate-clad roof with shallow eaves and pedimented gable ends. The site falls to the west with the polygonal chancel located to the east and the rectangular nave to the west, located above an accessible basement, formerly the Sunday School rooms. Pairs of shallow bays are located to the north and south of the nave. A crenulated tower is located at the north side of the chancel and a gable-ended bay is located in a corresponding position at the south side. Crowned with a decorative brick frieze with corner gargoyles, the tower incorporates groups of lancet windows which increase in number at each level. Windows are of single lancet form, grouped in two or three, or double lancet form with roundel above and a large tripartite window is located at the chancel (east) end of the church. Stepped angle buttresses are located at all corners of the building. Three fleches are positioned at the ridgeline of the nave and pairs of small ventilator gablets are positioned below the ridgeline of the chancel.

A grey granite memorial cross is located to the east of the church, near the Cromwell Road boundary.

Designed in a Gothic Revival style, the vicarage is a two-storey cement rendered brick building with slate-clad, steeply-pitched parallel gabled roof forms – two principal gables and a small central gable – which present as steep gable ends to the symmetrical principal elevation. The large gable ends are decorated with timber finials, spiral supports and cross beams and contain two-storey polygonal bays with eaved slate-clad roofs, pointed arch-headed windows with decorative label moulds and moulded sills

at the upper-level. The small central gable end contains a single window of similar design and a round window above. A shallow-pitched verandah roof, with decorative ironwork, lines the principal elevation and is fitted around the polygonal bays which continue to ground-level to flank a central entrance. Three tall, rendered chimneys with corniced capping are located at the main ridgelines and at the south side of the house. A single-storey wing is positioned across the rear elevation.

Two cement rendered brick gate piers with a curved profile stand between the church and vicarage, flanking a concrete path that leads to the parish hall. The hall comprises two rectangular cement-rendered brick forms – a large tile-clad gable-roofed rectangular form orientated north-south and a gable-roofed form which is positioned across the north (principal) elevation. The main hall at the rear has parapeted gable ends and buttresses that divide the side elevations into regular window bays, and the front form has a lower profile with shallow central pediment containing a name plate 'Parish Hall' and quoined pilasters and remnants of a central classically-detailed porch which has been demolished.

Key Features:

Church

- Brick church building constructed in a Gothic Revival style
- Bluestone base to building
- Steeply-pitched, slate-clad gabled roof with shallow eaves and parapeted gable ends
- Decorative polychromatic brickwork, including elaborate diaper-work and polychromatic voussoirs, and stone dressings
- Crenulated tower with decorative brick frieze, gargoyles and groups of lancet windows which increase in number at each level
- Single lancet windows grouped in two or three, and double lancet windows with roundels
- Large tripartite chancel (east) window
- Stepped angle buttresses at corners
- Three fleches at the ridgeline of the nave
- Pairs of small ventilator gablets below the chancel ridgeline
- Freestanding grey granite memorial cross to the east of the church

Vicarage

- Two-storey rendered brick house constructed in a Gothic Revival style
- Slate-clad roof comprising three parallel gabled roof forms (two principal gables and central small gable), presenting as steep gable ends to the principal elevation
- Symmetrical principal elevation
- Timber work to large gable ends including finials, spiral bracing and cross beams
- Two-storey polygonal window bays to principal front gables with hipped slate-clad roofs, pointed arch-headed windows with decorative label moulds and moulded sills at the upper-level
- Shallow-pitched verandah roof, with decorative ironwork, fitted around polygonal bays
- Central entrance between flanking polygonal bays at ground level
- Three tall, rendered chimneys with corniced capping
- Single-storey rear wing across the rear elevation

Parish Hall

- Single-storey cement-rendered brick building comprising two rectangular forms
- Large tile-clad gabled-roof building, orientated north-south, at rear with parapeted gable ends and buttresses that divide the side elevations into regular window bays
- Gabled-roof form positioned across the north (principal) elevation
- Shallow central pediment with name plate 'Parish Hall', quoined pilasters and remnants of a (demolished) central classically-detailed porch to principal (north) elevation
- Two cement rendered brick gate piers with a pronounced entasis (curved profile) at Cromwell Road boundary and concrete path leading to the Parish Hall.



Figure 10. St Martin's Church complex, aerial dated 16 May 2024 (Source: Nearmap)



Figure 11. Church chancel and chancel window from the south-east (Source: GJM Heritage, June 2024)



Figure 12. Vicarage from Cromwell Street (Source: GJM Heritage, June 2024)



Figure 13. Parish Hall entrance (Source: GJM Heritage, June 2024)

Intactness and Integrity

St Martin's Anglican Church Complex at 27, 27A and 27B Cromwell Road, South Yarra comprises a church and vicarage which both remain highly intact to their respective periods of construction. The 1927 hall remains reasonably intact to its period of construction although the classical-designed front porch has been removed. Despite this, overall the place retains a high degree of integrity as a church complex dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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).*

St Martin's Anglican Church Complex, South Yarra has strong associations with the development of South Yarra after the opening of the Oakleigh railway line in 1879 and establishment of the Hawksburn Railway Station. Subsequent rapid residential subdivision and the associated growth in population resulted in the provision of churches, and other community buildings, to service the local community. Built in 1883-1886, St Martin's Anglican Church remains highly intact to clearly demonstrate the continuous provision of pastoral care to the South Yarra community from the late nineteenth century, into the twenty-first century.

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).*

St Martin's Anglican Church Complex, South Yarra is a fine and highly intact representative example of a late nineteenth century and early twentieth century church complex, comprising a Gothic Revival church and vicarage and a relatively austere 1920s hall complex. The church displays typical characteristics of the Gothic Revival style, including steeply-pitched slate-clad roofs, brick construction with decorative

polychromatic brickwork and stone dressings, crenulated tower, pointed arch-headed windows including single lancet windows and large tripartite chancel window, stepped angled buttresses at corners and fleches at the ridgeline of the nave. The vicarage displays similar characteristics of the Gothic Revival style, including steeply-pitched slate-clad roofs and pointed arch-headed windows set in projecting two-storey polygonal window bays.

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

St Martin's Anglican Church and Vicarage, South Yarra are assured and well-executed examples of the Gothic Revival style, with both understood to have been designed by architect Edmund G Ovey. The two buildings, with their steeply-pitched gabled roofs and pointed arch-headed windows, present as a cohesive and refined pair of church buildings from the late nineteenth century.

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).*

St Martin's Anglican Church and Vicarage, South Yarra is of social significance for its long and continuing use as a community facility in the City of Stonnington. Established in 1883, St Martin's Anglican Church and Vicarage, South Yarra continues to serve the local South Yarra community as a religious institution for the pastoral care of its parishioners.

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

Due to their shared history, it is recommended that the Vicarage and Parish Hall be removed from HO379 Wilson Street Precinct and included within an extended HO28 to cover St Martin's Church, Vicarage and Parish Hall (see Figure 14).

It is recommended that the '*Heritage place name'* column within the Schedule to the Heritage Overlay be updated to:

St Martin's Anglican Church Complex
27, 27A and 27B Cromwell 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

It is recommended that the Vicarage and Parish Hall be removed from HO379 Wilson Street Precinct and included within an extended HO28 to cover St Martin's Church, Vicarage and Parish Hall as follows:



Figure 14. Recommended changes to Heritage Overlay boundaries.

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Previous Assessment

City of Prahran Conservation Review, Context Pty Ltd, 1993

References

Argus.

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

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Lewis, Miles (ed), *Victorian Churches, their origins, their story and their architecture*, 1991.

Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Plan No 37, City of Prahran, 1895.

Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) Detail Plan No 982, City of Prahran, 1896.

Prahran Rate Books (RB), as cited.

Prahran Telegraph.

State Library of Victoria, picture collection.

Stonnington History Centre, picture collection.

Telegraph, St Kilda, Prahran and South Yarra.

The Age.