Statement of Significance: Avoca House and Former Stables and Coach House, 8 Gordon Grove and 103 Caroline Street, South Yarra (June 2026)

Heritage Place:	Avoca House and Former Stables & Coach House 8 Gordon Grove and 103 Caroline Street, South Yarra	**PS ref no:**	HO45





This is an incorporated document in the Stonnington Planning Scheme pursuant to Section 6(2)(j) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

Figures 1 and 2: *Avoca House* (top) *at 8 Gordon Grove, South Yarra, and the Former Stables and Coach House* (bottom) *at 103 Caroline Street, South Yarra* (GJM Heritage, November and June 2024).

What is significant?

Avoca House and Former Stables & Coach House at 8 Gordon Grove and 103 Caroline Street, South Yarra.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

Avoca House

- Single-storey cream brick house in a picturesque Gothic Revival style of the Victorian period
- Prominent gabled ends to the north elevation, with decorative bargeboards, finials and pendants
- Steeply pitched gabled roof clad with slate and multiple prominent, round chimneys
- Concave verandah which projects around two bay windows on the north elevation, supported by timber posts, with timber brackets perforated with a circular motif, and a timber balustrade with a cross pattern
- Entrance on the east elevation marked by a square balustraded parapet that projects above the verandah roof
- Tall, timber-framed sash windows.

Former Stables & Coach House

- Two-storey brick outbuilding in a picturesque Gothic Revival style of the Victorian period
- Gable ends and dormer windows with decorative timber bargeboards, finials and pendants
- Gabled roof clad with slate and pairs of prominent chimneys
- Timber-framed, multi-paned windows with brick voussoirs and large sills.
- Pair of decorative, wrought-iron gates with brick piers and rendered ball cappings.

How is it significant?

Avoca House and Former Stables & Coach House at 8 Gordon Grove and 103 Caroline Street, South Yarra is of local historical, rarity and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Avoca House and Former Stables & Coach House at 8 Gordon Grove and 103 Caroline Street, South Yarra has a direct association with the early European history of South Yarra, when land was first subdivided and sold for European settlement in the mid-nineteenth century. Constructed for prominent pastoralist, merchant and fifth Mayor of Melbourne, William Montgomerie Bell, the property – originally extending from the Yarra River to Toorak Road and comprising a house, stables, fernery, caretaker's cottage, orchard, and a vineyard – is associated with the initial establishment of large estates along the southern banks of the Yarra River by wealthy businessmen. The estate was subsequently subdivided and on-sold over the ensuing years with Avoca House and the Former Stables & Coach House the only remaining buildings of the early Avoca Estate. Avoca House and Former Stables & Coach House remain substantially intact to clearly illustrate the earliest phase of European development in the City of Stonnington (Criterion A).

The Former Stables & Coach House at 103 Caroline Street, South Yarra is an early example of a residential conversion, which was undertaken in 1935 by architect, A Bramwell Smith for Mrs Dorothy Hope Alsop, widow of well-known architect, Rodney Alsop. Smith and Alsop had been in partnership from 1928 until Alsop's death in 1932. The conversion of the Former Stables & Coach House into a residential dwelling was featured in *Australian Home Beautiful* in 1936 (Criterion A).

Avoca House at 8 Gordon Grove, South Yarra is rare as one of only a small number of residences remaining in the municipality from c1850, representing the earliest phase of European development in the City of Stonnington. In combination with the Former Stables & Coach House, it is rare as one of only a small number of Victorian residences with associated stables and coach house remaining in the municipality and together the buildings provide clear evidence of the early development of South Yarra, and the City of Stonnington more broadly (Criterion B).

Avoca House at 8 Gordon Grove, South Yarra is a richly decorated and finely-executed example of a picturesque Gothic Revival style of the Victorian period. The detailing, including highly decorative bargeboards, finials and pendants, quoining to the north elevation, steeply pitched gabled roof clad with slate, prominent rendered chimneys, and projecting verandah with ornate timber brackets and posts, presents a highly resolved and high-quality expression of this architectural style (Criterion E).

The Former Stables & Coach House at 103 Caroline Street, South Yarra is a finely-executed example of a picturesque Gothic Revival style building of the Victorian period, which was sensitively converted to a residence in the 1930s. The early detailing, including decorative timber bargeboards, finials and pendants, gabled roof clad with slate with prominent chimneys and timber-framed, multi-paned windows with brick voussoirs presents a highly-resolved and high-quality expression of a picturesque Gothic Revival style, while its 1930s conversion to a residence introduced further quality elements including the decorative iron vehicle gate with brick piers and the southern pentagonal chimneys. The Former Stables & Coach House continues to present as a high-quality Victorian outbuilding (Criterion E).

Primary source

South Yarra Heritage Review (GJM Heritage, March 2025).