Statement of Significance: Bona Vista, 51-59 Kensington Road, South Yarra (June 2026)

Heritage Place:	Bona Vista 51-59 Kensington Road, South Yarra	**PS ref no:**	HO64





Figures 1 and 2: *Real estate advertisement photograph of Bona Vista* (top)*, and detail of Bona Vista* (bottom) (top, Realestate.com.au, 2010; bottom, GJM Heritage, April 2024).

What is significant?

Bona Vista at 51-59 Kensington Road, South Yarra, constructed 1884.

Elements that contribute to the significance of the place include:

- Two-storey brick house, with characteristics of High Victorian style
- Red brick construction with contrasting wide cream brick bands (overpainted) and cement render detailing
- Steeply-pitched slate-clad hipped roofs with shallow bracketed eaves
- Asymmetrical composition
- Cylindrical tower with steep conical slate-clad roof at the north-east corner
- Steep-pitched gable-ended entrance bay with moulded coping, rendered panels and a classically detailed porch with arched entrance, pilasters, large consoles and crowning pediment at the east elevation
- Tall, broad brick chimneys with strapwork
- Timber-framed double-hung sash windows with segmental arched window heads on the ground floor
- Stables, converted into a pool house
- Mature garden setting.

The 1920s addition to the north-west corner, the addition to the rear (south-west) of the residence, the brick garage and the perimeter fencing does not contribute to the significance of the place.

How is it significant?

Bona Vista, 51-59 Kensington Road, South Yarra, is of local historical and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington.

Why is it significant?

Bona Vista, 51-59 Kensington Road, South Yarra has strong associations with the development of South Yarra in the boom-years of the 1880s when large landholdings were subdivided and sold for residential development. Bona Vista was constructed in the early 1880s by Margaret Hobson on land purchased by her late husband – Dr Edmund Charles Hobson – in 1844. The house was constructed at the time the estate was subdivided for residential development. Bona Vista remains highly intact to clearly demonstrate this phase of development in the City of Stonnington (Criterion A).

Bona Vista, 51-59 Kensington Road, South Yarra is an assured and finely executed example of a substantial High Victorian-style mansion. The elaborate detailing, including complex asymmetrical form, steeply-pitched slate-clad roofs, decorative gable-ended entrance bay, cylindrical tower with steep conical slate-clad roof, and tall, broad brick chimneys with strapwork, presents a highly resolved expression of a large Victorian-era house. The stables (later converted into a pool house) and expansive garden setting contribute to the picturesque character of the place (Criterion E).

Primary source

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