Heritage Citation – Precinct

Heritage Place: Inverness Avenue Precinct	**HO Reference:** HO179
Address: 19-29 Inverness Avenue, 1-3 The Terrace and 55-65 Wattletree Road, Armadale	**Citation status:** Final
	Date Updated: 24 October 2023
Designer: Unknown	**Year of Construction:** 1901-1903
Builder: William Maben	



Photograph (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Location map and extent of HO179.

Heritage Group: Residential Buildings	**Key Theme:** Building Suburbs
Heritage Type: House	**Key Sub-theme:** Middle class suburbs and the suburban ideal
Significance Level: Local	
Recommendation: Retain as a local heritage precinct.	

Controls:	☐	External paint colours	☐ Internal alterations	☐	Tree controls
	☐	Victorian Heritage Register	☐ Incorporated Plans	☐	Outbuildings and fences exemptions
	☐	Prohibited uses may be permitted	☐ Aboriginal Heritage Place		

Statement of Significance

What is significant?

The Inverness Avenue Precinct, comprising a group of Edwardian era dwellings on Inverness Avenue, The Terrace and Wattletree Road, Armadale, is locally significant.

All properties are graded contributory to the precinct.

Character elements that contribute to the significance of the precinct include:

- A high degree of intactness arising from the construction of all the houses within a short period of time (1901-1903) and the absence of modern infill;
- The regularity and harmony of the single-storey, freestanding Edwardian era building stock;
- Intactness of individual buildings to their original states. Dwellings typically survive with their presentation to the street largely unaltered, retaining unpainted face brick, return verandahs, chimneys, window and door openings, and timber detailing;
- The uniform front setbacks and some consistency to side setbacks;
- The use of brick, timber and metal lacework; and
- Hipped 'M' roofscapes with projecting gables and brick/render chimneys.

Later additions and alterations to the properties are not significant.

How is it significant?

The Inverness Avenue Precinct is of local historical, representative and aesthetic significance to the City of Stonnington, and is associated with prominent local builder William Maber.

Why is it significant?

The Inverness Avenue Precinct is historically significant as a 1902 subdivision that was quickly developed as a matching group of Edwardian period dwellings by prominent local builder William Maben. The subdivision is indicative of the changes that occurred during the late 19th and early 20th century in the City of Stonnington, whereby there was a shift from sparsely developed paddocks to a middle-class urban area. The dwellings form a tangible link this period of time which resulted in a streetscape with a high degree of architectural unity. (Criterion A)

Due to the architectural unity of the group, the Inverness Avenue Precinct is a good representative example of Edwardian era dwellings built in a uniform style. (Criterion D)

The Inverness Avenue Precinct is aesthetically significant as a highly intact and visually cohesive Edwardian era streetscape. The buildings retain a high level of integrity as a group, and display cohesion through form, materials, setbacks and heights. Combined, they create a harmonious and attractive streetscape free of intrusions and modern development (with the exception of some detracting fences). The character of the precinct is complimented by the mature street trees in Inverness Avenue, notably the Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*), and the bluestone lanes to the rear of the properties. (Criterion E)

The Inverness Avenue Precinct is associated with William Maben who was a prominent builder in the area during the early 20th century. Maben is known to have built well over sixty residences in Malvern.

Maben Place in Armadale is named after him. The residences along Inverness Avenue were built as a group under Maben's guidance and to his designs. (Criterion H)

HERCON Criteria Assessment

A	*Importance to the course, or pattern of our cultural or natural history*	The Inverness Avenue Precinct is historically significant as a 1902 subdivision that was quickly developed as a matching group of Edwardian period dwellings by prominent local builder William Maben. The subdivision is indicative of the changes that occurred during the late 19th and early 20th century in the City of Stonnington, whereby there was a shift from sparsely developed paddocks to a middle-class urban area. The dwellings form a tangible link this period of time which resulted in a streetscape with a high degree of architectural unity.
B	*Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of our cultural or natural history*	The place does not meet this criterion.
C	*Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of our cultural or natural history*	The place does not meet this criterion.
D	*Important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or environments*	Due to the architectural unity of the group, the Inverness Avenue Precinct is a good representative example of Edwardian era dwellings built in a uniform style.
E	*Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics*	The Inverness Avenue Precinct is aesthetically significant as a highly intact and visually cohesive Edwardian era streetscape. The buildings retain a high level of integrity as a group, and display cohesion through form, materials, setbacks and heights. Combined, they create a harmonious and attractive streetscape free of intrusions and modern development (with the exception of some detracting fences). The character of the precinct is complimented by the mature street trees in Inverness Avenue, notably the Italian Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) and the bluestone lanes to the rear of the properties.

F	*Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period*	The place does not meet this 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 the continuing and developing cultural traditions*	The place does not meet this criterion.
H	*Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our history.*	The Inverness Avenue Precinct is associated with William Maben who was a prominent builder in the area during the early 20th century. Maben is known to have built well over sixty residences in Malvern. Maben Place in Armadale is named after him. The residences along Inverness Avenue were built as a group under Maben's guidance and to his designs.

Description

- ### Physical Analysis

The Inverness Precinct is located in Armadale in the City of Stonnington, due east of the Melbourne CBD. The precinct is small and occupies most of a triangular block defined by Wattletree Road to the south, The Terrace to the west and Inverness Avenue to the northwest. Inverness Avenue runs parallel to the railway line. The precinct is traversed by two laneways that retain their original bluestone paving. The area is planted with mature trees and dense ground cover shrubs to form an additional barrier against the railway line.

The following lots form the extent of the precinct: 19-29 Inverness Avenue, 55-65 Wattletree Road and 1-3 The Terrace.

The Inverness Precinct is defined by low-density residential housing situated on consistently sized lots. The houses are predominantly intact single-storey Edwardian style houses. The properties have a distinct open-face red brick, double fronted façades and return bullnosed verandahs, although some houses have been rendered and painted. The properties have an M shaped roof profile with some clad in the original slate roof tiles. A defining detail in the roof and form of the structures is the projecting gable roof to the side, which houses a second entrance; all but the two houses on The Terrace feature this original roof form. The street front façades are defined by open gables with two arched double hung timber sash windows, concrete sill, and arched lintel with keystone motif. The gables are embellished with timber battened gable ends in varying designs. The remainder of the façade is defined by the return bullnosed verandah with cast lacework and valance and turned timber posts in varying designs. The eaves are supported by brackets with textured stucco moulding in between the brackets. The houses have two to four open face corbelled brick chimneys with terracotta pots projecting from the main roof,

again with variations in the design. There is a mixture of timber picket fences and solid brick fences, and one example of an intrusive solid stone fence.

Inverness Avenue is a wide street with parking on one side and railway reserve on the other. The street has a narrow footpath and nature strip with young deciduous trees and bluestone curbing and guttering. The railway side of the street is characterised by Italian Cypress (*cupressus sempervirens*) which adds character to the precinct. The railway reserve includes a number of mature Italian Cypresses. The Terrace has parking on both sides of the street, a narrow footpath and nature strip, young deciduous trees, and concrete edging. Wattletree Road is a major road with a wider footpath and nature strip, taller deciduous trees, and roadside parking. Wattletree Road also accommodates a tram line.

The residential streetscape of the Inverness Avenue Precinct is defined by the consistency of lot sizes, setbacks, built form and detailing of the Edwardian houses. There are some visible differences in the original design of the buildings and subsequent modifications. However, the variation in the materiality and heights of the front fences remain the most distinct differences from street view. Nevertheless, as a group these houses are considered to be highly intact, in good condition, and significant for their harmonious façade, form and detailing. The integrity of the streetscape and contributing houses are high overall.

• Alterations and Additions

While most houses retain the typical Edwardian design and form, some properties have been modified. Such modifications are more noticeable due to the high consistency of the streetscape character. Visible streetscape modifications include:

- No. 19 Inverness Avenue: The façade has been rendered and painted. The original windows have been altered and the verandah detailing removed. This example is the most modified house in the precinct.
- No. 29 Inverness Road: The façade has been rendered and painted.
- No. 57 Wattletree Road: A high stone wall fence has been added which is highly inconsistent with the typical brick or timber picket fences in the precinct.

All the properties have extensions of varying sizes at the rear or side of the main structure. Houses with major extensions and additions include 23 and 25 Inverness Avenue, 57-63 Wattletree Road and 1-3 The Terrace. Some properties also contain a freestanding addition bordering the rear lane. The front setbacks remain consistent with a front yard, driveway and carport to the side or rear of some properties.

History

• Historical Context

For thousands of years preceding European colonialism, the area now known as ‘Stonnington’ was the traditional home of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung people of the Eastern Kulin Nation. This environment would have provided historical traditional owners with access to pre-contact plains, grassy woodland, and floodplains on the banks of the Yarra River (Birrarung), Gardiners Creek (Kooyong Koot), and Hawksburn Creek (now channelised), in a rolling landscape on the northern shore of Port Phillip Bay. It is important to note that the rich cultural heritage of traditional owners in Stonnington did not end with colonialism—it has a rich presence to this day.

The first land sales in what would become Armadale began in 1854 following the surveying of Glenferrie Road and High Street. The suburb of Armadale was formally included in the City of Prahran and, as is the case with many suburbs in Stonnington and surrounds, it received its name from a lone but notable property. 'Armadale House' was built by one James Munro, son of the first keeper of the Prahran pound. On arriving in Australia from his home in Sutherland, Scotland, Munro would work for Fergusson and Moore—Fergusson being James Fergusson of Kooyong. Munro went on to become Premier of Victoria and, later, Attorney General, before losing it all in the economic crash of the 1890s. Following the turn of the century, many of the original nineteenth-century properties faced demolition and subdivision, encouraging growth in early twentieth century and the inter-war period. While Armadale today enjoys an affluent reputation for its association with the surrounding suburbs of Toorak, Malvern and Kooyong, traces of remnant working class houses can be seen at the small timber workers cottages present in some parts off High Street and near the border with Malvern (Cooper 1924, 268).

- ## Place History

This precinct of houses comprising 19-31 Inverness Avenue, 1-3 The Terrace and 55-67 Wattletree Road were built as a group by William Maben in 1901-3. The group was built on part of the site of The Pines, a house formerly located in Crown Portion 50.

Crown Portion 50 was first sold at the Crown land sales in 1854 to the Fulton, McKinnon, Sargood syndicate and comprised 13 acres, 3 roods and 17 perches, with a frontage to Wattletree Road. The allotment was immediately subdivided with Jonathon Leith, the new owner of the portion fronting Wattletree Road, buying the land under the Transfer of Land Act in 1863 (Bower). In 1879 the railway line was extended from South Yarra to Caulfield, dividing this allotment.

In 1882 the subdivision of the adjacent allotments (Crown Portions 51 and 52), known as the Mount Pleasant Estate, created the west end of the present-day Inverness Avenue as well as St Georges Road, St James Road and The Terrace (SLV Lodged Plan 429). A plan was lodged for the east end of Inverness Avenue on 17 April 1902 (SLV Lodged Plan 4294).

> Architect William Maben was born in 1852 in Scotland, where he was educated and also served his time as a carpenter and joiner. He emigrated to New Zealand in 1873, and remained in business there until 1881. He subsequently came to Melbourne and started his own building business. He would eventually go on to become a prominent Malvern builder, and is listed in Victoria and Its Metropolis (1888) as one of the builders of the colony:{Mr. Maben] is doing a large and increasing trade. [He] has erected sixteen houses of various sizes in the Railway-avenue, Malvern, where he resides, and at least forty others in the suburb. (Victoria and Its Metropolis 1888, 645).

As demonstrated in the Sands & McDougall directory Maben was living in Wattletree Road near Duncraig Avenue, Armadale by 1901. His business premises were at the railway yards off Glenferrie Road.

In 1901, Maben purchased six acres of land comprising the precinct south of the railway and a triangle of land on the north side of the railway. The sale was registered at the Titles Office on March 13, 1902.

The land bounded by Wattletree Road, The Terrace and the railway, had previously belonged to Michael and Ernest Vallanan. The only building on this land was an old house known as "The Pines" (MMBW

Detail Plan No, 1738). This house and its outbuildings were situated on the land now occupied by 27 and 29 Inverness Avenue. Maben demolished these buildings and subdivided the land, erecting seven houses in Inverness Avenue, two houses in The Terrace and eight houses in Wattletree Road.

The subdivision was indicative of the changes occurring in the area during the late 19th and early 20th century. The shift from sparsely built-on paddocks to garden suburb was most evident in subdivisions like the Gascoigne and Waverley Estates. Smaller residential subdivisions however, such as Maben's, were perhaps more significant in shaping the present character of the suburb. As one building journal noted in the late 1890s:

> …the favourite suburb Malvern seems to be at present booming in the erection of better classed residences. Quite a score of these new buildings consisting of seven to ten rooms have been either completed or are in the course of erection within the last two months(Strahan 1989, 65).

In Maben's subdivision, the first houses completed were 53 Wattletree Road (now demolished) and 55 Wattletree Road. These houses were, "in course of erection" when the rate records were compiled by Malvern Council in December 1901. The next house constructed was 57 Wattletree Road which appears, together with 53 and 55 Wattletree Road, on a Board of Works survey plan dated May 2, 1902 (MMBW Detail Plan No 1738).

Maben then built the remaining houses in Wattletree Road, all of which were sold to new owners by December 1902. By this time, Maben had also started construction of Nos. 17 (now demolished), 19,21 and 23 Inverness Avenue. Work was far enough advanced on these houses for the Malvern Council to rate these properties as "B[rick] H[ouses], 7 rms". 17 and 19 Inverness Avenue were sold late in December 1902. The remaining houses in Inverness Avenue, together with 1 and 3 The Terrace, were completed and occupied by new owners in 1903.

Each of the houses built by Maben were almost identical in style, with subtle differences in chimney design and gable decoration. Furthermore, with the exception of 29 Inverness Avenue and 3 The Terrace, which occupy triangular allotments and differed slightly, each of Maben's houses was built to the same plan.

Comparative Analysis

The Inverness Precinct is notable as an area comprising housing stock built during a small window of time and located within a small and clearly definable precinct. There are several comparable examples in the City of Stonnington where residential development occurred within a clear stylistic period, for example: HO123 Auburn Grove, Armadale (Victorian); HO125 Cambridge Street, Armadale (Victorian); HO133 Gascoigne Estate, East Malvern (Edwardian); and HO355 Caroline Street Precinct (Post-war).

Comparative examples of freestanding Edwardian era precincts include:

- **Chomley Street Precinct, Prahran (HO386)**. The Chomley Street Precinct is an Edwardian residential streetscape that, like the Inverness Avenue Precinct, developed in a remarkably short period of time between c.1911 and c.1913 and is contained to one small and clearly definable area. Similar to Inverness Avenue, the precinct is characterised by Edwardian era dwellings, consistent open setbacks, detached built forms, single-storey construction, consistency in construction materials (brick, render and tile), and a complete absence of modern infill

development or prominent additions and alterations. The Chomley Street Precinct has more uniform front fencing, all appearing to be timber pickets, while Inverness Avenue has larger allotments, return verandahs and side gables.

- **Union Street Precinct, Armadale (HO377).** The Union Street Precinct contains a substantially intact and consistent collection of late-nineteenth and early twentieth century housing stock from the Victorian and Edwardian era, as well as some interwar period dwellings. Similar to the Inverness Avenue Precinct, the precinct is characterised by consistent open setbacks, detached built forms, mostly single-storey construction, and an absence of modern infill development or prominent additions and alterations. Unlike the Inverness Avenue Precinct, there is more than one architectural style present, a wider range of materials. Moreover, the Union Street Precinct was developed over a longer period of time as opposed to a few select years. In addition, the Inverness Avenue precinct has larger allotments, return verandahs and side gables, and incorporates Victorian style elements into the Edwardian era dwellings with their lower 'M' formed roofs rather than the higher bungalow roofs.

Although it is not of the Edwardian era, the **Cambridge Avenue Precinct (HO125)** was built as a group by the same builder in a short period of time, between 1887-88. This has clear historical comparisons with the Inverness Avenue Precinct and a similar streetscape character outcome. However, the Inverness Avenue Precinct is less uniform due to some façade alterations and front fence styles.

There are several houses nearby that were also built by Maben, including 70, 72 and 74 Wattletree Road, opposite the precinct to the south, and 1 Alleyne Avenue over the railway to the east. All of these tend to reinforce the small cohesive group of the study area.

Reflecting on the above examples, the Inverness Avenue Precinct is one of the most visually and historically cohesive residential streetscapes in the City of Stonnington. The precinct has a strong consistency in setbacks, form and detailing, and buildings are located on larger blocks than other precincts. Further, it incorporate some features which differentiates the group, such as return verandahs, side gables and ‘M’ roofs.

While the houses in the study area are not individually significant, as a group they form a precinct of recognisable uniformity and significance.

Precinct Map



Grading Table

* S: Significant

C: Contributory

NC: Non-contributory

Refer to Heritage Victoria's Model brief for consultants (p.6) for explanation of designations.

Street address	*Place type*	*Style/era*	*Grading*
19 Inverness Avenue	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
21 Inverness Avenue	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
23 Inverness Avenue	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
25 Inverness Avenue	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
27 Inverness Avenue	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C

Street address	Place type	Style/era	Grading
29 Inverness Avenue	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
1 The Terrace	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
3 The Terrace	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
55 Wattletree Road	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
57 Wattletree Road	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
59 Wattletree Road	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
61 Wattletree Road	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
63 Wattletree Road	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C
65 Wattletree Road	House	Federation/Edwardian Period (1902 – c.1918)	C

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MMBW Detail Plan No, 1738, 5 May 1902.

Limitations

1. Access to all heritage places was limited to a visual inspection from the public domain. The interiors of buildings and inaccessible areas such as rear gardens were not accessed as part of this heritage study.
2. Condition and site modification assessment was limited to a visual inspection undertaken from the public domain.
3. The historical notes provided for this citation are not considered to be an exhaustive history of the site.

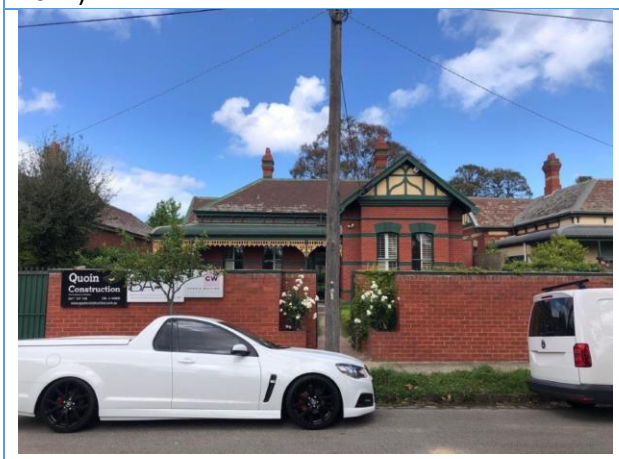
Further Images



Wattletree Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



Wattletree Road (source: Extent Heritage Pty Ltd, 2021).



21 Inverness Avenue (source: City of Stonnington, 2020).



19 Inverness Avenue (Source: City of Stonnington, 2020).



27 Inverness Avenue (source: City of Stonnington, 2020).



1 The Terrace (source: City of Stonnington, 2020).

Authors

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